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# A HISTORY OF FRANCE



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BY  
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IN THREE VOLUMES

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WITH FOUR MAPS

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# A HISTORY OF FRANCE

## CHAPTER XXIX

### THE REVOLUTION

(1789-1795)

THE natural complement of the establishment of the Court in the Tuileries was the removal of the Assembly from Versailles. It installed itself at first in the Archiepiscopal Palace and subsequently in the *manège* (riding-school) of the Tuileries, on the north side of the palace garden.<sup>1</sup> From this time forward both King and Assembly were completely in the grip of the mob. Paris, or rather the incendiary mob in Paris, directed events; the influence of clubs, newspapers and *cafés* was enormously enhanced, and from this period dates the importance of the Jacobins' Club. The Jacobins derived their name—applied to them at first in derision—from the Jacobin Monastery<sup>2</sup> which they hired for their meetings. They sprang from the Breton Club, which had included the more ardent of the deputies, Mirabeau, Barnave, Sieyès, Pétion, and Robespierre. Established in Paris, the club took the name of *Société des amis de la Constitution, séants aux Jacobins*, and its membership largely increased; moreover, by August, 1790, it had 150 affiliated societies in the provinces.

In one sense the King profited by the migration to Paris. All moderate men now swung round to resist—some courageously, the majority all too feebly—the domination of the extremists. Lafayette and Bailly, the King once in Paris, regarded their duty to the cause of freedom as performed, and began to give tardy attention to their duty to the cause of order. Best of all, Mirabeau, whose political vision was always a point ahead of that of anyone else, saw the danger of the situation and threw himself on to the King's side. For the first

<sup>1</sup> Almost on the line of the present Rue de Rivoli.

<sup>2</sup> On the site of the present Marché de St. Honoré.

time Louis had real wisdom at his disposal. Mirabeau's is by far the greatest political intellect of the period ; his penetration, his immense grasp, and his power of using other people's services combined with his wonderful oratorical gifts to make him the greatest force in contemporary politics. Unfortunately he was deficient in character ; a *mauvais sujet* all his life, he had become accustomed to sell his brain, his pen, his voice, to the highest bidder. But now, at what was to prove the close of his life,<sup>1</sup> his sense of impending calamity outweighed his selfish ambitions, and, although he received payment for his services, he was convinced and sincere in the advice that he gave.

This advice was embodied in fifty-one "Notes for the Court," which were privately submitted to the King.<sup>2</sup> Their tenor was this: Create a moderate party in the Assembly and do not scruple to spend money to attain this object ; buy up authors and journalists ; organize the Paris police and watch the clubs ; appoint a strong ministry, to include such popular idols as Necker and Lafayette, but also some men of real ability ; Mirabeau suggested himself for a minor office, declaring his willingness to "be the Father Joseph" to his bitter enemy, Lafayette.<sup>3</sup> Above all quit Paris, but for Rouen or Compiègne, not for the frontier ;<sup>4</sup> and summon the Assembly to follow. This advice shows that Mirabeau, the greatest political thinker of the period, believed in the loyalty and moderation of the kingdom.

Meanwhile the Assembly had once more plunged into its constitutional task. On 14 and 22 December, 1789, it produced its scheme of local government. France was to be divided into eighty-three Departments,<sup>5</sup> each Department into six or more Districts, each District into eight or more Cantons. In the *Chef Lieu* of each Department a Departmental Admini-

<sup>1</sup> Mirabeau's direct relations with the Court began early in 1790: he died in April, 1791.

<sup>2</sup> They are printed in full in Bacourt's edition of the *Correspondence of Mirabeau and la Marck*: op. cit.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.* op. cit. i. 21.

<sup>4</sup> The first suggestion was Fontainebleau. *Ibid.* i. 113.

<sup>5</sup> They were not actually created until 26 February, 1790.



stration was set up, and in each District *Chef Lieu* a District Administration. The Cantons, each of which contained several *Communes*, were not administrative areas; every *Commune* had a municipality as before, the functions of the municipality being reorganized by decree of 14 December. The Departmental Assemblies had very important duties. They distributed taxation amongst the Districts, arranged for the levying of taxes, paid the departmental expenses, administered poor relief, were responsible for public health, prisons, hospitals and asylums, as well as education and public works; they also supervised the upkeep of roads, canals, and bridges, the upkeep of churches and other religious buildings, and what we should call development expenditure. The functions of the District Administrations were quite subordinate; they were little more than the agents of the Departmental Administrations. Both administrations were divided into a *Conseil* and a *Directoire*; the *Conseil* sat periodically, the *Directoire* permanently; the latter was the executive body.

The municipalities, set up by law of 14 December, administered Communal property and were responsible for local police and public health. They were also responsible for the distribution and levying of taxation within the *Commune*, as well as for the schools, hospitals, and churches within the *Commune*. A curious arrangement was introduced into the Municipal Law by which a body of Notables, twice as numerous as the members of the municipality, was elected; on important occasions these Notables sat with the municipality and the joint body became the *Conseil général* of the *Commune*.

The organization of the Municipality of Paris was not effected until 21 May, 1790; the city was divided into forty-eight sections, and thus the municipal organization of France was completed.

The franchise and methods of election adopted for the establishment of these local administrations have a special importance because they were also applied to the election of deputies to the National Legislature. The qualification of a primary elector was "active citizenship," and every man of twenty-five years and over, not in domestic service, domiciled

in the electoral area, paying direct taxes equal to the value of three days' labour,<sup>1</sup> and willing to take the civic oath, was an active citizen. These electors, in addition to appointing the members, notables, and officials of the municipalities,<sup>2</sup> met in cantonal assemblies and chose one secondary elector for every hundred active citizens. The qualifications for a secondary elector were the same as those for a primary elector, except that the sum payable in direct taxation was raised to the equivalent of ten days' labour. The secondary electors of each Department chose the thirty-six members of the Departmental Administration, and the Departmental Officials (*procureurs généraux syndic*).

Meeting in District Assemblies the secondary electors similarly chose the twelve members of the District Administration and the District Officials (*procureurs syndic*). The qualification for membership of either administration as well as for municipal office was the same as that for a secondary elector. But the most important function of the secondary electors was the choice of the 745 deputies to the National Assembly. One-third of the deputies were to be appointed on a territorial basis, one-third on a basis of population, and one-third on a basis of direct taxation: but all were to be chosen by the Departmental Assemblies of secondary electors. The qualification for a deputy was the payment of one *marc d'argent* in direct taxation and the possession of some landed property.<sup>3</sup> Clearly the franchise and the qualifications for service as a deputy or as local administrator were on a strictly undemocratic basis: in fact about 84 per cent of the population was disfranchised,<sup>4</sup> and by these decrees a bourgeois aristocracy took the place of the old nobility.

<sup>1</sup> The value of a day's labour, for purposes of estimating the amount of direct taxation, was regulated by a law of 15 January, 1790: it was not to be estimated at more than 20 *sous*.

<sup>2</sup> Only in Paris the municipality was elected indirectly, the sectional assemblies choosing secondary electors for the purpose.

<sup>3</sup> But this was modified in the actual Constitution of 1791 which made all active citizens eligible (*infra*, p. 15).

<sup>4</sup> Aulard, "Histoire politique de la Révolution française," p. 66, gives the figures: 26,000,000 inhabitants, 4,298,360 active citizens.

As to the arrangements for local government, too much power was given to the municipalities, hardly any to the District administrations, which were superfluous. Far too many administrative bodies were created, and the expense of local government was vastly increased. Moreover, although provisions were introduced for the disbandment of the primary assemblies after their functions had been performed, they proved inadequate. Loopholes were soon found, and the evil system of constituents organizing themselves to watch and tyrannize their representatives was suffered to grow up. As to the new division of France into Departments, the abandonment of local history and traditions was part and parcel of the stupid craving for absolute symmetry and uniformity which possesses a certain type of politician. It possessed the revolutionary politicians in a very high degree, making them always eager to abandon tradition for ideas, in this case for mere mathematical precision. Complete severance with the past was one of the crazes and one of the blemishes of the Revolution.<sup>1</sup> The reorganization of the municipal and administrative system was not only vicious in itself but ill-advised in the moment of its adoption. It was an exchange of horses while crossing the stream. Just at the moment when the maintenance of authority and the preservation of order was all-important, the whole system was dislocated by sweeping changes. The consequences were terrible; disorder quickly became general; pillage and rapine prevailed throughout the country; chaos ruled supreme.

These questions were soon thrown into the shade by the financial problem and that of the relations between Church and State with which it quickly became intertwined. The complete collapse of the finances had been the inevitable

<sup>1</sup> In this connexion some remarkable words of Mirabeau may be quoted. "We are not," he said, "savages from the banks of the Orinoco come to set up a society. We are an ancient nation, too ancient no doubt for our epoch, we have a pre-existing government, a pre-existing King, pre-existing prejudices. We must as far as possible adjust all these things to the Revolution, and avoid violence of transition." The Assembly was too prone to forget all this, and to behave as if it were legislating for Mirabeau's savages.

result of the collapse of the administration in the summer of 1789. Taxes ceased to be paid, and on 25 September Necker had produced a scheme the puerility of which is good evidence of the completeness of the financial *impasse*. His suggestion was an income tax of 25 per cent, the valuation to be left to the tax-payers. This absurd proposal was actually carried; but, as might have been expected, the tax proved a failure. Necker avowed as much on 18 November. It was clear that other sources of revenue would have to be found, and already on 2 November, on the motion of Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun, the Assembly had passed a decree for the appropriation to State uses of the property of the Church. The wealth of the Church was in fact the only financial resource ready to the hand of the Government. Opinions will differ as to the wisdom and morality of this step. Proposals of more doubtful honesty have since been made by governments without the excuse of necessity which was the best justification of the Constituent Assembly. It must be understood that in this case the State gave its *quid pro quo* by guaranteeing the stipends of the clergy,<sup>1</sup> the expenses of the cult (to use the actual words of the decree), and the maintenance of the poor. In other words the Catholic Church became the established and endowed religion of France. The working clergy did not suffer. Those who suffered were the higher Church dignitaries and the members of religious houses, and the natural complement of the decree of 2 November, 1790, was that of 19 February, 1790, by which with certain modifications, religious houses were abolished in France.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile on 18 December, 1789, it was decreed that paper money (*assignats*) should be issued on the security of the ecclesiastical and royal lands, and the sale of the former was begun.

By the decrees of 2 November and 19 February the Assembly had involved itself in that most difficult of all

<sup>1</sup> The stipend of a *curé* was fixed at not less than 1200 francs with house and garden.

<sup>2</sup> All who wished to be released were released from their vows and were to receive a pension. Houses concerned with education and charity were retained. Certain houses were to be retained for those who did not wish to be released from their vows. Nuns could remain where they were.

problems, the question of the relations between Church and State : an Ecclesiastical Committee was appointed, which was largely swayed by Jansenist ideas. In May, 1790, this Committee submitted to the Assembly a proposal for a Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The ancient dioceses were to be abolished, and the number of bishoprics reduced to fifty ; the episcopal office was to be made elective ; stipends were to be fixed, that of a bishop at from 12,000 to 20,000 *livres*, that of a *curé* at from 1200 to 6000 ; residence was to be enjoined, and the bishops were to be guided by councils of vicars. Relations with the Papacy were to be rigidly restricted and were afterwards regulated by law of 9 June, 1791, which enacted that all bulls and other papal missives had to be submitted to the Legislature. The Civil Constitution of the Clergy became law on 24 August, 1790. It was the most fatal of all the acts of the Constituent Assembly. The attempt to apply to the one body of all others most susceptible to the influence of tradition, the same renunciation of tradition which was being applied to the State was ill-judged in the extreme. It was vigorously resisted by all good Catholics. There was great difficulty in procuring the canonical confirmation of the elected bishops and on 15 November, 1790, a law had to be passed, providing that an elected bishop, having failed to procure confirmation after applying to all the bishops in his *arrondissement*, could appeal "*comme d'abus*" to the District Tribunal. This Tribunal had power to put him in possession of his temporalities, and to nominate a bishop who should give canonical confirmation. In December, provoked by the opposition in the provinces, the Assembly imposed on all the clergy of France an oath that they would observe the Civil Constitution. The King, whose orthodoxy was gravely wounded by these measures, resisted, but was at last overborne. The majority of the clergy refused to conform and were deprived of their cures. The breach between the Revolution and Catholicism was complete.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> About sixty clerical deputies took the oath, and four bishops. Talleyrand maintained that he saved France from becoming Presbyterian by consecrating two constitutional bishops before he laid aside the mitre. It

While the Civil Constitution was still under discussion in the Assembly, the grave question of the right to declare war had been brought into prominence by a dispute between England and Spain over their respective rights in Nootka Sound (May, 1790). The question at once arose whether France was still bound to support Spain in accordance with the terms of the Family Compact. Mirabeau—a statesman amongst dreamers—persuaded the Assembly, while abjuring all conquest, to ratify the defensive part of the compact, and it was decreed (22 May, 1790), that while the Legislative had the full right to declare war and make peace, it could only do so on the proposition and by the sanction of the King. Spain shortly afterwards composed her differences with England (12 October, 1790).

Meanwhile revolutionary excitement had been maintained by means of what were called “federations,” the new National Guards meeting at various centres and swearing obedience to the Assembly. On 14 June, 1790, the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, after Mass had been said at an altar on the *Champ de Mars*, Lafayette first, followed by the President of the Assembly and the King, took the oath.

The dissolution of the old regime was proceeding apace. The most alarming feature was the growing disloyalty of the army which was strikingly demonstrated by the mutiny of the garrison of Nancy in August, 1790. Bouillé, who was in command, had no option but to attempt to quell the mutiny, but he only succeeded in doing so after he had lost 400 men and forty officers. The French regiments implicated were disbanded, and twenty-two men of the regiment of Châteauvieux were sentenced to death by their own officers, and fifty to the galleys. This was done with the sanction of all the constituted authorities including the Assembly. But the cause of the mutineers was loudly advocated by such agitators as Collot d’Herbois at the Jacobins, with the result that the culprits were released. This of course spelt ruin to the discipline of the army. In the navy things were just as bad

should be remembered that the Pope never formally rejected the Civil Constitution.

and with consequences even more disastrous. Riots in the dockyards were skilfully fomented and nothing was done to check insubordination. In the next European conflict the French navy consequently fought under a terrible handicap of indiscipline. By laws of 28 February and 26 June, 1790, the Assembly had reconstituted the army and navy, bringing them under the control of the Legislative by decreeing an annual vote of the necessary sums. Purchase was abolished, and all employments and ranks were opened to all citizens. The civic oath was imposed and sixteen years of service made a man an "active citizen". These laws were not unreasonable and had nothing to do with the mutinies of the autumn of 1790.

The Assembly's chief work in the autumn of 1790 was the reorganization of the Judicial System. Already on 30 April it had been decreed that in criminal cases there should be juries, in civil cases none. But the main law on justice was decreed on 16 August, 1790. In each district a court of five judges chosen by the secondary electors was set up, holding office for six years and being re-eligible: it had jurisdictions in all cases involving personal property and movables up to a capital value of 1000 *livres* and in all cases involving real estate up to a value of 50 *livres* of revenue. There was no real court of appeal, but appeals lay to other district courts. Petty cases were tried in the first instance by a *Juge de Paix* sitting with assessors. This was a Cantonal Tribunal: both judge and assessors were elected by the Cantonal Primary Assembly; they held office for two years and were re-eligible. Their final jurisdiction extended to matters involving a sum of not more than 50 *livres*, and, with appeal, up to 100 *livres*: appeal lay from them to the District Judges. In every town where there was a district tribunal the *Juges de Paix* and Assessors formed a *bureau de Paix* or Court of Conciliation to attempt the conciliation of litigants. A valuable feature of the whole system was the general attempt to encourage arbitration and conciliation and the discouragement of appeals. Family tribunals were also encouraged for the settlement of family disputes. The municipalities were accorded power to try police

most lively emotions.<sup>1</sup> The excellently planned and executed escape from the palace by way of an unoccupied *appartement* which adjoined the royal suite; the perfect sang-froid of the Queen, who twice made the dangerous journey through the courtyards thronged with national guards—she passed so close to Lafayette that she actually struck his coach with her cane; the unruffled phlegm of the King who, having drawn his bed curtains, escaped while the valet who shared his chamber was undressing in the adjoining room, and walked nonchalantly through the courtyards, even stopping to tie his shoe-lace as he went; the naïve delight of the royal children at an adventure so unusual; the meeting of the fugitives in the *citadine* and the dangerous drive through the streets with Fersén on the box; the successful exit through the *Barrière St. Martin* and the transference of the fugitives to the *berline* which was waiting outside. As they left Paris behind they breathed more freely, told the stories of their various adventures, and allotted the rôles which each was to play. At Bondy Fersén left them. Spirits rose with the sun, and the King began to study maps of the route; jokes passed. So elated were his fugitives that they forgot the need for concealment and were easily recognized by the *maître des postes* at Chaintrix.<sup>2</sup>

Varennes lay some sixty miles ahead, a sleepy little town cut in two by the River Aire. Here relays of horses and a detachment of Bouillé's troops awaited the fugitive on the farther side of the river. Other detachments had been told off to meet the King at various places along the route; the first suspicion of danger came to the travellers when they found no detachment at Pont Sommevesle. The *berline* was six hours behind time and Choiseul, who was in command, had been intimidated by the hostile attitude of the villagers into a dereliction of duty. The truth was that ever since their recognition at Chaintrix the identity of the travellers had gone before

<sup>1</sup> The best account of the flight is that of M. Lenôtre, "The Flight of Marie Antoinette" (transl. Stawell, 1906).

<sup>2</sup> The almost incredible story of a two-hours' delay at Étoges over a meal with an old officer of the royal household, Chanilly, is supported by the evidence of Fersén (see his journal). Lord Acton believed it ("Lectures on French Revolution," op. cit. p. 185.)



them, and at Ste. Menehould and Clermont the troops, who were also themselves disaffected, had been prevented from performing their office of escort. From Clermont the son of the postmaster, Drouet, rode by short cuts to warn Varennes; he entered the town and passed the *berline* while the travellers were inquiring about relays in the upper town. Drouet roused the inhabitants and got the bridge blocked just in time to cut the royal party off from relays and escort. The fate of the fugitives now depended on the attitude of the *procureur* of Varennes—Sauce, a pastry-cook. Sauce was civil and kind, but displayed unexpected resolution. He told the King that he must wait till morning and, with weary bodies and sinking hearts, the royal family accepted the hospitality he proffered. There was still hope that Bouillé might march in and rescue them, and Sauce was a brave man to take this risk. At 6 a.m. messengers who had spurred from Paris arrived with authority for the King's arrest. Louis did his best to create delay, but Sauce was adamant, and at 8 a.m. the return journey began. It was one long undignified torture. The Tuileries were reached on the evening of 25 June. Bouillé had ridden into Varennes two hours after the departure of the royal family, but had made no attempt to follow them. The flight to Varennes was by no means the fiasco it has been painted. The early stages were admirably managed and it was within an ace of being successful. The neglect of concealment and the delay at Étoges were foolhardy, but the crucial blunders were at the other end, Bouillé's officers behaving with lamentable ineptitude. The fugitives would have had a better chance of escape had the military been ignored altogether.

The result of the abortive flight was disastrous. By electing to fly towards the frontier the King had laid himself open to the suspicion of collusion with Austria, and lost the last vestiges of confidence. A new situation was created, and for the first time there was open talk of a republic. More than that, during the suspension of the Monarchy (21 June to 14 September), something dangerously like a republic was set up. But the Assembly had no real desire for a republic. It was bourgeois and anti-democratic at heart and the bourgeois rallied

to the monarchy as the best safeguard against a devastating democratic upheaval. Even the Jacobins registered an opinion strongly in favour of the monarchy. It was in the *Cordeliers*, the most advanced of the clubs, of which Danton was the leader, that the cry for a republic was heard. There, and in certain of the newspapers, especially in Brissot's "*Patriot français*," the demand was loudly put forward and found some echo in the street. Eventually a compromise was effected on the basis of an emasculated monarchy with elected ministers. For the moment the issue was between this union of republicans and democrats and the monarchist *bourgeoisie* which disliked both, but particularly the latter. The democrats tried to convert the feast of the *fédérés* into a democratic demonstration, putting forward a demand for a referendum to decide what should be done with the King, and a petition was drawn up repudiating him; it was laid on the altar of the *Champ de Mars* for signature.

Bailly and Lafayette, ardent against democracy, dispersed the crowds which flocked to sign the petition; the bourgeois fired on the democrats; three people were killed. The "massacre" of the *Champ de Mars* (17 July) was grossly exaggerated, but its historical significance was considerable; it marked the final cleavage between *bourgeoisie* and democrats; the former, including Barnave, Lafayette, and the Lameths, seceded from the Jacobins and formed the *Feuillants* Club, while in the Assembly Robespierre, Pétion, and Buzot were thrown into direct antagonism to Barnave and le Chapelier. For the moment the victory of the Constitutionalists seemed assured; for the small letting of blood took the colour from the cheeks of the democrats; Danton, Desmoulins, and Marat went discreetly into hiding. Attempts were made to raise the qualification for the franchise and to protect the Constitution. On 4 September the Revolution was declared to be over, and on the 14th the King accepted the Constitution and was restored to his functions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "The Principal Features of the Constitution of 1791." (Hélie, "*Les Constitutions de la France*," 1880, pp. 268 *sqq.*)

At the head of the Constitution (*Titre I*) stood the Declaration of the Rights of Man already referred to.

*Titre II* recorded the division of France into Departments and de-

On 1 October the Legislative Assembly met and the constitutional experiment began. It proved a complete failure. Within a year the Constitution which had cost so much labour and was so vociferously acclaimed was torn in pieces. It was in fact unworkable. The executive was powerless and the

fixed active citizenship on the lines of the earlier laws which have been enumerated.

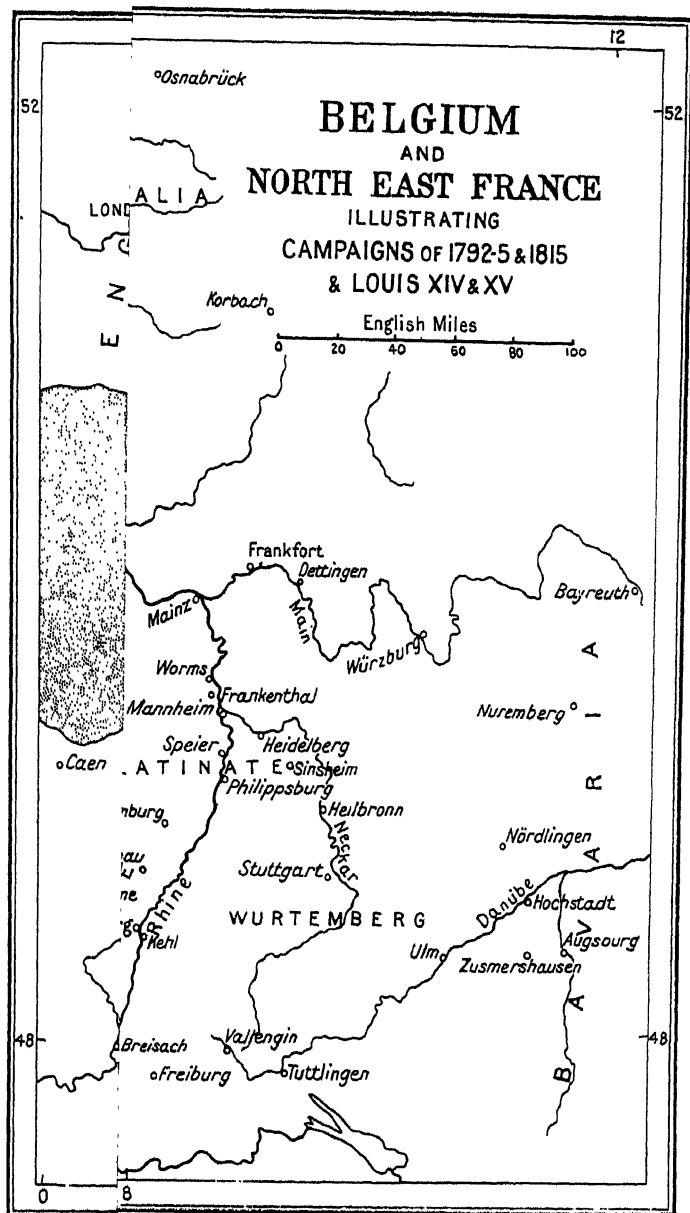
*Titre III* was concerned with the organization and functions of the Legislature which had already been dealt with in a law of 12 June, 1791. The Legislature was to be unicameral and biennial. The electoral and franchise qualifications already imposed (*supra*, p. 4) were maintained, but the qualifications for a deputy were lowered, all active citizens becoming eligible: the provision requiring domicile was also rescinded. Deputies could sit in two, but not in three, consecutive Assemblies. By a fatal and foolish decree of 16 May, 1791, passed on the motion of Robespierre, members of the Constituent Assembly had been excluded from service in the forthcoming Legislative Assembly.

The chief powers of the Legislative Body were to propose and decree laws; fix public expenditure; impose and distribute taxation; create and appoint to public offices; control coinage; administer national domains; provide for army and navy; declare war on the formal recommendation of the King; ratify treaties (and their ratification was a condition of validity); and fix the place of their own meeting. Every decree had to be read three times at intervals of at least eight days, and the King's veto was only suspensive; any measure passed in three successive legislatures became law without the royal consent. Moreover, all decrees affecting the internal economy of the Legislative Body were exempted from the need of the royal consent.

The King was to receive a civil list and a guard. He was to be served by ministers of his own choosing who were responsible to the Legislative Body, and who had the right to be heard in the Assembly. The Ministry had been the subject of earlier legislation. On 7 November, 1789, it had been decreed that no member of the Assembly could hold office. On 26 January, 1790, it was further decreed that no member of the Assembly could hold office even if he resigned. This provision recurred in the law of 27 April, 1791, in which the organization of the Ministry was dealt with, and also in the Constitution itself. Six Ministerial Departments were set up, and there was to be no *premier ministre*. Executive powers were in the hands of the King, who remained the head of the army and navy. Constitutional revision was reserved to the people. If demanded in three successive legislatures, a special assembly was called to which, in addition to the usual 745 members, 245 were elected for constitutional purposes alone, and the functions of these 245 ceased when the constitutional question was decided.

ministry, cut off from the Assembly, doomed to perpetual mistrust; moreover the "self-denying ordinance" of Robespierre excluded from the Assembly all tried politicians and diverted political energy to the clubs; the debates of the Jacobins soon became more important than those of the Assembly. The majority of the deputies were undecided in their views and sat uneasily in the centre, driven hither and thither by every puff of eloquence or blast of intimidation. The *feuillants* or bourgeois constitutionalist party, led by Dumas and Bigot de Préameneau, at first predominated, but the few men who were to make reputations sat on the left: Vergniaud, Guadet, Gensonné, Merlin de Thionville, Chabot, and Basire. Broadly speaking, however, there were in the whole house barely a dozen names which were destined to become famous.

The King found it as impossible to co-operate with this monarchical bourgeois Assembly as he would have found it to do so with one of definitely republican opinions. He was not prepared to carry out the Constitution, and he at once placed his veto on the decrees imposing the civic oath on the clergy and threatening the *émigrés* (the Frenchmen who had left France for political reasons, amongst whom were his two brothers) with outlawry. Louis was in fact by this time intent on securing the armed intervention of the European powers to upset the Constitution. Already on 27 August, 1791, Austria and Prussia had issued the Declaration of Pillnitz, asserting that the state of affairs in France was a matter of European concern, that if the other powers could be brought into line, they would take action, and that meanwhile they would hold their troops in readiness. Louis did not see how dangerous it was to intrigue with foreign courts, how the suspicion of treachery would destroy all that was left of loyalty in France. With the *feuillants* he welcomed the drift towards war as the best means of restoring the royal prestige. The republicans and all intriguing politicians welcomed it for the very opposite reason. Only the democrats, Robespierre, and the section of the Jacobins that followed him, deprecated it; for they feared that the need for a powerful





executive to carry on the war would act as a restorative to the monarchy.

Suspicion of treachery and foreign interference are feelings that grow fast and a violent war fever soon arose in Paris, fostered by Brissot and the republicans and by no means discouraged by the King's advisers. The ministers in fact were intent on war; they were insignificant men, with the exception of Narbonne, who represented the views of Lafayette and advocated war for the rehabilitation of the Crown. It was soon generally believed that the ministry was ready to co-operate with the Crown in playing into the hands of Austria. The *Brissotins* denounced the Queen and the "Austrian Committee" with such vehemence that Louis was forced to dismiss his advisers (March, 1792) and summon a *Brissotin* ministry which was at heart republican. Roland was the most conspicuous republican in this ministry, which, however, included Dumouriez, a very able adventurer who was not a republican at all. Dumouriez soon dominated, and ruined the cohesion of, the ministry. His policy was to isolate Austria and strike at her through Belgium, that is to restrict the war. This might have been the best policy for France, but it would have been fatal to republicanism.

On 20 April, 1792, war was declared on Austria and a fresh epoch in the Revolution began. In the absorbing interest of the internal history of the period students of the Revolution are apt to lose sight of the importance of a war to which justice has never been done by historians, and which is somewhat overshadowed by the great military epoch that followed. Nevertheless French history was affected at every point by the course of the war. In the first place it rapidly drove the King and Queen into treachery against the nation and sealed their ultimate fate. Secondly it emphasized the need for centralized and absolute government and brought into being that terrible but highly efficient engine, the Committee of Public Safety. Thirdly it was the pretext for, and ostensible justification of, the Terror which, in the eyes of its authors, was simply martial law carried to its extreme logical conclusion. Finally it set the seal on the hegemony of Paris, ruined the

idea of federalism, and brought the *Brissotins* (or *Girondins* as we shall learn to call them), who advocated that idea, to the scaffold. In fine there is hardly a political event between the flight to Varennes and the Peace of Basle which was not in some degree dependent on the war. If hostilities had begun successfully there might have been no republic; but they began ill. Dumouriez failed to isolate Austria and had to face the combination of Austria and Prussia. The French armies fell back before the allies and suffered humiliating reverses. Belgium was invaded on 29 April. General Dillon was pushed forward towards Tournai, and Biron towards Mons and Brussels. Dillon's troops fled in panic at their first contact with the enemy and murdered their commander, while Biron gave way before inferior forces. Lafayette never moved. It was not till Dumouriez took the field in person in August that the tide began to turn.

These early reverses were the signal for violent legislation. Decrees were passed for the dismissal of the royal body-guard, for the formation at Paris of a camp of 20,000 men, and against the non-juring priests. Louis played into the hands of the republicans by placing his veto on the two latter decrees and dismissing the ministry (12 June). This step, which had been recommended by Lafayette, provoked genuine popular resentment, not because of the republicanism of the retiring ministers but for fear of a *coup d'état* in face of the enemy. Eight days after the dismissal of the ministry the palace was invaded by a mob, and the royal family subjected to prolonged insult and intimidation. By its immediate organizers this *journée* was designed to show the King that treachery would not be tolerated; by the republicans who had their share in preparing it, it was intended at once to undermine the throne and to show the helplessness of Louis. But the events of 20 June had other effects; they grossly offended, though they did not intimidate, the King. He did not withdraw the vetos, but he felt more and more that his only hope lay in the intervention of the powers. Lafayette also, seeing that the bourgeois ascendancy was threatened, left his army and returned to Paris to strike a blow for it; he appeared in the



Assembly on 28 June and urged the punishment of the ring-leaders. His intervention, however, was a complete failure, and with his departure the fate of the bourgeois party was sealed. Lafayette failed because he too was suspected of treachery to France in face of the enemy, and because France cared nothing for *bourgeoisie* or democracy, monarchy or republic, when it was a case of dealing with a foreign invasion.

Affairs at the front were indeed going from bad to worse and the Army of the North was falling back on Lille and Valenciennes. On 3 July Vergniaud delivered an impassioned harangue in the Assembly, tracing the military collapse and the national danger to the action of the King. His motion of *patrie en danger* was accepted. The Assembly swung from right to left, because of the difficulty of reconciling loyalty and patriotism. While it declared its adherence to the monarchy, it was forced, in order to prevent treason, to take several steps which were welcome to the republicans. Thus it brought up the *fédérés* to the camp at Paris, partly to overawe the King, and partly to provide drafts for the army; revoked the suspension of Pétion and Manuel, the mayor and *procureur* of the *Commune*, which had been decreed by the Department of the Seine, and, by declaring the *patrie en danger*, gave permanence to all the municipal authorities, made it legal for men to arm themselves, and encouraged military ardour throughout the country. These steps, so fatal to the monarchy and the *bourgeoisie*, were taken by the monarchical and bourgeois assembly in the interests of patriotism.

The arrival of the *fédérés* was a great access of strength to the republicans, and steps were taken to provoke a crisis. A "directory of insurrection" was formed, but it was really Danton, at once a republican and a patriot, who, from his position of *procureur-substitut* of the *Commune*, directed the conspiracy. The crisis of August, 1792, is Danton's crisis both in its patriotic and in its republican aspects. Several times the insurrection seemed on the point of breaking out. On 28 July it was announced that forty-seven of the sectional assemblies of Paris (which were sitting *en permanence*) had voted the deposition of the King. This gave a semblance of

popular sanction to the insurrectionaries. The democratization of the National Guard, which was effected in the early days of August, snatched almost their sole remaining weapon from the hands of the *bourgeoisie*. For all this the catastrophe might have been averted, but for the wanton and foolish provocation of the manifesto of the allies' Commander-in-Chief, the Duke of Brunswick, which reached Paris on 3 August.<sup>1</sup> This most injudicious and provocative document set public opinion against the Crown and determined the Committee of Insurrection to strike. From the moment of its publication the overthrow of the King was inevitable.

The details of the insurrection of 10 August are obscure. The popular forces, controlled by Danton and the brewer Santerre, numbered about 20,000, of whom some 5000 or 6000 were *fédérés*, the most fiery being the newly arrived Marseillais who had already fallen foul of the regular troops (30 July). The palace was defended by a large force, estimates of which vary from 2500 to 6500, but the latter figure is probably far too high; it included 950 Swiss. Many of the National Guard who were on duty at the Tuileries were disaffected; Mandat who commanded them was responsible for the defence of the palace. His plan was to prevent the junction of the two main bodies of insurgents by holding the river bridges, and to take the columns in rear as they advanced on the palace. Mandat was summoned to the Hôtel de Ville and, courageously responding to the order, was assassinated, probably by Danton's orders,<sup>2</sup> as he crossed the Place de Grève. His death completely disorganized the defence of the palace.

The actual attack began tamely enough. The crowd demanded access to the palace courtyards and secured it without bloodshed; for a moment it seemed that the garrison might

<sup>1</sup> Brunswick's manifesto was actually written by a certain Geoffroi de Limon who had been in the service of Monsieur the King's brother, but it was inspired by Fersén and Marie Antoinette. See Chuquet, I. 148; Forneron, "Histoire des Émigrés"; Sorel, "L'Europe et la Révolution Française" (1893, etc.), 338; Fersén, "Diary and correspondence relating to the Court of France" (transl. Wormeley, 1902), II. 491.

<sup>2</sup> There is no absolute proof. Danton took responsibility for the act at his trial.

surrender without resistance. The officers of the Swiss, however, quite rightly ordered their men to fire, and the first volleys did great execution. The details of the fighting that ensued have been greatly obscured by controversy. Royalist writers maintain that the mob was easily kept off by the fire of the Swiss, that the fighting was not severe nor the bloodshed great, and that the palace was only taken because the King, who had withdrawn across the gardens to the Assembly, gave the order to cease fire. Revolutionary enthusiasts on the other hand credit the popular forces with great bravery, maintain that they defeated the garrison partly by taking the palace in flank by the galleries of the Louvre (which is true), partly by sheer valour,<sup>1</sup> that the King's message was reserved by its bearer until it was clear that future resistance was useless.<sup>2</sup> On one point both sides agree: on the completeness of the sack and the merciless execution of the helpless Swiss after the surrender. The Assembly voted the suspension, not the deposition, of the King, its intention, in spite of what had happened, being to cling to the monarchy. But the Assembly was no longer master of the situation; that mastery had passed to the *Commune*, the true victor of 10 August. A provisional ministry was appointed<sup>3</sup> with Danton as Minister of Justice. Legally this ministry was the Government of France, but much of its power was usurped by the insurrectionary *Commune* which on the night of 9 August had driven out the legal municipality.

August 10 was thus not so much a triumph of republicanism as of democracy. It was the bourgeois regime even more than the monarchy that breathed its last in the Tuileries on

<sup>1</sup> A great deal of information can be found in Marcel and Pollio, "Le Bataillon du 10 Août, 1881". See also Aulard, article on "10 August" in "Grande Encyclopédie".

<sup>2</sup> Bertrand de Molleville, "Mémoires," 1. 238.

<sup>3</sup> War—Servan.

Foreign Office—Lebrun.

Interior—Roland.

Justice—Danton.

Finance—Clavière.

Navy—Monge.

that fateful night. The King was only suspended; he might be restored: the bourgeois regime had perished beyond all hope of restoration. The Assembly decreed that a Convention should be summoned (elected by universal suffrage<sup>1</sup> for all over twenty-one years of age). Thus perished the bourgeois regime and democracy reigned in its stead. How was it that this democratic victory hardened into a triumph for republicanism? Mainly because of the increasing menace of the military situation. The invasion of France had begun on 19 August. On the same day the most prominent of the French generals deserted to the enemy. After 10 August Lafayette attempted to rally the army and the Eastern Provinces to the Crown; failing in this, he placed himself in the hands of the allies. Dumouriez was immediately sent to the front to replace him, but could do nothing to prevent the fall of Longwy on 23 August and Verdun on 2 September. All he could do was to occupy the main passage of the Argonnes at Grandpré where the road from Châlons to Clermont crosses that low range; but he was unable to prevent the allies effecting a passage through two of the more northerly passes and sweeping southwards to threaten his communications. On 19 September Kellermann joined Dumouriez with 16,000 men from the Army of the Rhine which put the French in a numerical superiority.<sup>2</sup> On the 20th the hostile armies came into touch at Valmy near Ste. Menchould. The artillery duel, with which the action opened, and as it turned out also closed, was on the whole favourable to the allies, who had fifty-two pieces against the French forty, and the Prussian infantry was ordered to charge. This charge, however, for some unexplained reason, either the sodden state of the ground or the accuracy of the French fire, never got home, and so this strange battle ended. The military features of the action are almost negligible. The French defence was never really tested. The only remarkable feature was the complete futility of the allies. After Valmy the allies paused and opened negotiations. Then on the 30th they

<sup>1</sup> The distinction between active and passive citizens was abolished; but domestic servants were excluded, and the indirect system of election was maintained.

<sup>2</sup> 36,000 to 34,000.

began slowly to withdraw, and by 23 October France was freed from the invaders. The action—scarcely to be dignified with the title of battle—had completely reversed the military, as it should have reversed the political, situation.

Meanwhile on the Rhine Custine's campaign had been a mere procession; for on the whole the revolutionary propaganda, as voiced by this frothy commander, was welcomed by the hotch-potch of German States on the Rhine which had long been accustomed to lean on France. Speyer surrendered on 30 September, Worms on 4 October, and on 21 October the French entered Mainz. Frankfort bought itself off. Montesquiou in Savoy and Anselm in Nice had also prospered. Savoy was eager for union with France. Anselm took Nice on 30 September but found the Niçois less amenable.

The danger that had seemed so great had been fully utilized by the extremists in Paris, by those that is who required not only a republic but one which should be under the heel of the capital. The massacres of September, the direct responsibility for which lay with Marat and a number of obscure ruffians, his followers, were as much a triumph for republicanism as 10 August had been for democracy. The pretext was that the imprisoned reactionaries were a menace to the State, and that to destroy them was simply to destroy the auxiliaries of the enemy. The work was effectively done. In Paris alone more than 1000 persons perished in a most horrible manner, and an attempt was made to extend operations all over France. No one had the courage to interfere. All the ministers were indirectly responsible—Roland actually visited the prisons while the butchery was in progress—and Danton, who as Minister of Justice was answerable for the lives of the prisoners and who was strong enough to have intervened, was the most responsible of all. To say that they regarded the military situation as grave enough to justify martial law does not justify them in having condoned murder. Nor is it easy to understand what help the prisoners could have given to the enemy or in what sense they were an immediate menace to the State.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> M. Aulard has made a special study of the massacres and his researches reduce the number of victims in Paris to 1089, a sufficiently

The massacres of September set the seal on the ascendancy of Paris. It was under their shadow that the elections to the Convention were held; they were held that is to say under conditions utterly destructive of independence, held too under tremendous pressure from the Jacobin organizations with which France was honeycombed. The result was a further triumph for democracy, but also a triumph for republicanism, as well as for the principle that Paris should dictate to France. The country was probably still monarchical at heart, though alienated from Louis XVI by that monarch's unfortunate blunders; still inclined towards a bourgeois constitution, and still resentful of the domination of the capital; but so paralysed by the treason of the King, so terrorized by the violence of the Jacobins, and so terrified by the events of September, that it gave a verdict contrary to its opinions.

A republic was now inevitable, though the idea was in most quarters accepted with reluctance. The Convention met on 20 October, and its first act on the 21st was to declare the abolition of royalty. Whether the republic should be centralized or federal was a question which remained to be decided. The continued hegemony of Paris was desirable, perhaps necessary, for the successful prosecution of the war; but it was fraught with grave dangers to the State, and eventually it plunged France into a bitter struggle which only ended in July, 1794. It was over this question of the supremacy of Paris that the Jacobins, at one in their call for democracy, and latterly agreed as to the necessity of a republic, split in two, the *Girondins* standing out for federation and the "Mountain" for centralization. At first the omens seemed to favour the *Girondins*. The ministry and a majority

terrible roll. Danton had given public expression to his belief that in the existing crisis fear was the only weapon. He was not the man to repudiate the responsibility for an act of blood even though he had no direct share in it. He afterwards declared that he was the author of the massacres which he probably was not (Sorel, *op. cit.* III. 34). Napoleon's opinion was that the massacres of September had a salutary effect on the invaders, and he professed himself an admirer of Marat—"Il avait de l'esprit mais était un peu fou" (Gourgaud, "St. Hélène," *op. cit.* I. 327 *sqq.*),

of the Convention were on their side. Nor did they lack boldness; they accused Robespierre of aiming at a dictatorship; they violently attacked the *Comité de Surveillance* of the *Commune* which had organized the massacres; they demanded a departmental guard for the protection of the Convention, they protested with success against the camp of *fédérés*, and on 29 October Louvet made a specific attack on Robespierre. On the other hand in the Communal elections (December) the *Girondins* met with a great set-back; their opponents easily retained their majority in the municipality.

Three great questions now confronted the Convention—the war, the framing of a constitution, and the fate of the King. The alliance between Austria and Prussia had been much shaken by the repulse of September, 1792; indeed it only continued because both powers vaguely desired to protect the person of Louis XVI, and to secure indemnities, Austria in Bavaria, Prussia in Poland.<sup>1</sup> For the time being, however, all was going well for France at the front. Dumouriez won the brilliant victory of Jemappes, near Mons, on 6 November—a glorious vindication of the work of the army reformers. The French entered Brussels on the 14th, and by the 28th the Austrians had evacuated the Netherlands.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile the Constitutional Committee of the Convention<sup>3</sup> was at work, but it was not till February, 1793, that it produced its report, and by that time the whole situation had been altered by the trial and execution of the King. After the events of 10 August the Royal Family (to wit, the King and Queen, with the Dauphin Louis, Madame Royale, and the King's sister Madame Elisabeth) had been confined in the Temple, where, at the instigation of the *Commune*, they were treated with always increasing harshness. The great question of the winter of 1792-3 was neither the war nor the Constitution but the fate of Louis. It was this question that embroiled

<sup>1</sup> Sorel, *op. cit.* III. 130.

<sup>2</sup> Dumouriez was in a considerable numerical superiority over the Austrians but he was wretchedly equipped.

<sup>3</sup> The first Constitutional Committee comprised Sieyès, Paine, Brissot, Pétion, Vergniaud, Gensonné, Barrère, Condorcet, and Danton,

France with all Europe, stultified the Constitution, and prolonged unduly the period of revolutionary government, and the dictatorship of the capital.

The execution of the King quickly became the chief item in the policy of the Mountain, who desired the continuance of exceptional conditions, revolutionary government, and the maintenance of the ascendancy of Paris. A committee was appointed to examine the papers in the Tuileries, and this committee, Girondist though it was, reported unfavourably to Louis, whereupon it was decided to try him at the bar of the Convention. Robespierre urged that this was unnecessary, and that he should be executed simply on the grounds of expediency. The Girondist plan, however, was adopted, and on 11 December Louis appeared at the bar and listened to his indictment. On the 26th the trial began; the defence was ably conducted by a young lawyer named Desèze. The *Gironde* proposed a referendum; the Mountain resisted and carried the day.<sup>1</sup> After prolonged votings it was decreed that Louis was guilty, that there should be no referendum, and (by a majority of one vote) that the penalty should be death. A motion for respite was lost, and on 21 January the descendant of St. Louis and Henry IV laid his head under the guillotine.

The execution of the King marks a fresh epoch in the Revolution. Being recriminatory it was a moral blunder; the blood of Louis in the end choked more men than the blood of Danton. It was also impolitic, it condemned the country to a fierce war with a united Europe; this in turn sealed the fate of the bourgeois federal republic, involved the maintenance of revolutionary conditions, and postponed indefinitely

<sup>1</sup> It was the discovery of the strong-box in the Tuileries which contained all sorts of incriminating papers that finally ruined Louis' chances. Practically every one except Robespierre felt that he might be incriminated. Fouché's conduct at the King's trial is a good example of the way in which many of the deputies were terrorized into voting against their real opinions. That "stupefying opportunist" intended to vote against the death penalty, but when he saw how the votes were going he swung round and voted for death (Madelin, "Fouché," 1901, i. 54). Similarly Orleans, who had promised his son not to do so, voted for death.



the Constitution and peace. The fall of the Bourbons was thus a victory for the Revolution rather than for the republic. All this had been premeditated on the part of the extremists; Robespierre and his party were now out on the path of ambition; they realized that for them power and even life depended on the continued ascendancy of the capital; it was to seal this ascendancy that the King was sacrificed.

England and Holland (1 February) and Spain (March) now entered the arena, and the whole aspect of the war was changed. After his victory at Jemappes Dumouriez had overrun Belgium, but his scheme for conciliating that country and using it as a base for further operations was ruined by the violence of the revolutionary government. The era of propaganda had opened,<sup>1</sup> and much to their disgust the Belgians learned that the French occupation, which they had welcomed as a release from the unpopular rule of Austria, was to involve religious intolerance, the imposition of revolutionary institutions, compulsory "Liberty" and—worst of all—compulsory circulation of worthless *assignats*, and they rapidly turned against the French.<sup>2</sup> Dumouriez' plan, which would have seriously injured England and, if it had resulted in the capture of the Dutch fleet, would have brought France on to terms of naval equality with England, was ruined by interference from home. And now it was necessary to prepare for war on a much larger scale.

In February, therefore, the Convention decided to mobilize 300,000 fresh troops, thus bringing the French fighting strength to over 500,000 men. They avoided the unpopularity of avowed conscription, leaving it to each district to make up the required numbers as best it might. Once more, as in the days of Louis XIII and Louis XIV, the French were concen-

<sup>1</sup> The era of propaganda began with the Convention's decree of 19 November, 1792, that it would succour all nations struggling to be free. On 15 December, on the motion of Cambon, a decree was passed which put the cost of being freed on the aspirants to freedom.

<sup>2</sup> The maladministration of the new War Minister, Pache, who went to the War Office on 3 October, 1792, had compelled Dumouriez to live on the country, a very unpopular thing. Dumouriez was furious at having to "play the part of Attila".

trated in four main armies. Dumouriez was to invade Holland with the Army of Belgium, that of the Moselle was to besiege Coblenz; the Army of the Rhine was to invade Swabia, while a fourth army lay in reserve at Châlons. Unfortunately war-office maladministration and lax methods of enlistment had seriously damaged the fighting qualities of the troops. Dumouriez indeed took Breda and Gertruydenberg (26 February, and 1 March), but in the early days of March Coburg relieved Maestricht and defeated Miranda, while Custine, who had pursued a brawling revolutionary policy on the Rhine and had pushed on, contrary to instructions, as far as Frankfort in November, only to withdraw again to Mainz in December, was now forced back from Mainz (which had been annexed to France on 14 February) on Landau. He left the defence of Mainz to d'Oysé, who held it till 23 July.

Dumouriez had to be withdrawn from Holland. He was naturally indignant, and at once set to work to restore confidence in Belgium by disavowing the policy of his Government. Coburg, now at the head of a very powerful army, engaged the French at Neerwinden on 18 March. Dumouriez was ill-served by the volunteers and was defeated; but he managed to withdraw in good order, and Coburg made no attempt to follow up his success. Utterly disgusted, Dumouriez opened negotiations with Coburg; always a monarchist, he had in his ministerial days tried to reconcile the King to the Constitution; but with regard to the present government, he had come to feel that his first duty was to upset it by fair means or foul. On 5 April he deserted his army and went over to the Austrians. Treason is always an unpleasant thing; but this much may be said for Dumouriez, that it was not personal pique that drove him into the enemy's camp, but a sincere belief that an Austrian occupation of France would be a lesser evil than the continuance of revolutionary government.

The news of Dumouriez' defection, which implied the collapse of the Belgian campaign, was not the only ill news that reached Paris in March. It was in that month that the first and most serious of the internal revolts against the Revolution broke out—the rising in la Vendée. That remote

and rural district, conservatively attached to Church and Crown, was deeply incensed at the execution of the King and at the attacks on religion, and on 14 March the town of Cholet was taken by an army of insurgents led by a game-keeper called Stofflet. This was the first action in a rebellion which was to be a serious danger to the State.

The Convention was now thoroughly aroused to the danger of the situation; as Isnard said in a phrase which might well be the motto for 1793 it was "no longer a question of forms but of saving the country"; and, to save the country, they created a government a hundred times more arbitrary than the one which had been overthrown. Already the idea of a Committee of the Convention responsible for national defence had prompted the formation of a *Comité de Défense Générale* on 1 January, 1793, but this Committee had proved too large and disunited; on 25 March it was reorganized, and on 6 April a fresh Committee was created—that of Public Safety. It comprised nine members, responsible for all matters relating to defence, external and internal, with power to override ministers and dispose of all the resources of the State. As agents it had the Commissioners of the Convention, now called *représentants en mission*—deputies sent by the Convention to the armies and all points of danger or importance—whose powers were now largely extended; as a weapon it had the Revolutionary Tribunal which had been set up on 9 March, with power to try all cases of conspiracy against the nation. This tribunal was reorganized on 29 March, and began its operations on 6 April.

In the establishment of this terrible but momentarily necessary tyranny the *Gironde* had co-operated with the Mountain; but in the spring of 1793 a fresh cleavage between these two sections of the Jacobin party began to show itself; this cleavage was due not so much to any difference of opinion over the war or the execution of the King, as to a difference concerning the proper sphere and functions of the capital. Was the continued hegemony of Paris necessary to the successful conduct of the war and the maintenance of a strong government? The answer of the *Girondins* was, no; that of the Mountain,

yes. The Mountain was to this extent right that it was natural, and, so long as the crisis continued, necessary, that the capital should lead; but Paris was exercising an influence altogether out of proportion to the importance of any imaginable capital. In the early stages of the Revolution that influence had been demonstrably disastrous. Yet many people believed that in the autumn of 1792 Paris had saved France, and that in the present crisis she could do it again. Over this question political parties were now rent asunder, the *Girondins* holding that Paris should relapse into her mathematical position of one eighty-third of the kingdom, the *Montagnards* pressing her moral position and the need for her continued dictatorship. A third party eventually grew up, which, adopting a middle course, held that, while the capital had a special mission of leadership, that mission fell short of actual dictatorship, although in view of the national crisis her temporary dictatorship might be necessary. That party had its seat at the *Cordeliers* and its leader was Danton. And surely this last party was right. Paris was not France, but morally she was much more than an eighty-third part of France. The city indeed had a curiously unstable history—an anti-national alliance with the Burgundians, a blindfold adherence to the League and even to Spain in the religious struggles; it is no wonder that men like the *Girondins* fought shy of her, and it is most remarkable that in this city, so anti-national in the past, should have been found the rallying ground of patriotism in 1792 and 1793. Danton and his friends deserve credit for appreciating without exaggerating this fact. These parties now began to organize themselves, the *Girondins* by the appointment of a Commission of Twelve, the Jacobins in the Committee of Public Safety, the former relying on the Convention and looking, vainly enough, to the provinces for support, the latter relying on the *Commune*, the majority of the Sections, and the temporary support of the Dantonists.

The first Committee of Public Safety, however, was Dantonist in tone. Danton had in fact created the Committee to tide over the la Vendée-Neerwinden crisis. He was not to be the last man in the Revolution to evoke spirits that he was

unable to lay. All the vigorous and wholly unconstitutional measures of 1793 were inspired by him—the organization of the Committee, the progressive taxes and the forced loans, the law of the *Maximum* (3 May), which established a uniform price for grain, varying according to the harvests and the reserves, and which was afterwards extended to other articles of necessity; the Revolutionary Tribunal and the Revolutionary Army of Paris.<sup>1</sup> All these things were so many buffets to the *Gironde*, who resented extraordinary measures and rightly regarded the appointment of the Committee of Public Safety as a confirmation of the supremacy of Paris. But the Dantonist Committee, if it did not scruple to employ arbitrary means in order to accomplish its task, was alive to the necessity for lightening that task. Danton's simple and highly practical intellect had always realized that a war of revolutionary proselytism was absurd. It had always been his desire to bring France, revolutionized and republican, back into the comity of nations: for he rightly believed that this would be a far greater triumph for her than any that could be secured by missionary ardour. Through the Committee of Public Safety, therefore, he not only fulminated against the measures just enumerated, but recanted the bombastic threats of 19 November and 15 December. On 13 April on his proposal it was decreed that France would not interfere with the affairs of her neighbours. This decree marks an important change in the foreign policy of France.

The *Gironde* now began to ride for a fall. They arrested Marat and dragged him before the Revolutionary Tribunal, by which he was triumphantly acquitted. Then they proposed the dismissal of the Convention and the summoning of the *suppléants* to Bourges.<sup>2</sup> On 18 May a Commission of Twelve was appointed to investigate the acts of the Sec-

<sup>1</sup> The Parisian Revolutionary Army of 6000 men was the instrument of revolutionary government in the provinces. It was at the disposal of any *Commune* to enforce the Terror. It was established on 5 September, 1793, and disbanded in March, 1794.

<sup>2</sup> i.e. the reserve members, in number one-third of the number of deputies, elected to replace members who retired or died.

tions<sup>1</sup> and *Commune* of Paris and to protect the Convention. This Commission grappled with the redoubtable *Commune* and the still more redoubtable insurrectionary Committee which was sitting at the *Archévêché*. It arrested Hébert, the editor of the obscene but popular "*Père Duchesne*," and began to make war on the Sections. The *Commune* demanded the release of Hébert and provoked the *Girondin*, Isnard, into an indiscretion that was fatal to his party (25 May); in passionate terms he swore that if the Convention were injured Paris would be annihilated. This decided the Insurrectionary Committee to strike. They forced the *Girondins* to liberate Hébert, abolished the *Commune*, substituted themselves in its place, and appointed Hanriot, a daring ruffian, to the command of the National Guard. On 30 May the Convention was surrounded and forced to abolish the Commission of Twelve and to place the armed force of Paris on a permanent footing. The Tuileries, where the Convention now sat, was thrown open to the public and forty *sous* a day were voted to every *sansculotte*<sup>2</sup> who remained under arms—all this in an Assembly where the *Gironde* predominated. That party in fact was terrorized into voting its own destruction. On 2 June the Convention was again surrounded. The Committee of Public Safety which, while anxious for the elimination of the *Gironde*, was jealous of any encroachment on the Convention, now invited the *Girondins* to proscribe themselves, and at the same time urged the Convention to break up its sitting and denounced the Committee of Insurrection. Hanriot, however, forced the Convention to return to its hall and there, under the strongest pressure from without, it voted the suspension of the leading *Girondins*.

<sup>1</sup> For the Sections of Paris, *vide supra*, p. 3; the sectional or primary assemblies of Paris (comprising all the "active citizens," about 82,000 in number) were legally bound to dissolve on the completion of their electoral functions. The declaration of "*patrie en danger*" gave permanence to all assemblies; and thus the Sections secured a legal existence.

<sup>2</sup> The origin of the nickname is obscure. It was applied to the Revolutionaries by their opponents and enthusiastically adopted by the former: it signifies breechless rather than trouserless; breeches were the dress of the better classes.

Paris had triumphed over France; the *Commune* over the Convention; the Jacobins over the *Gironde*.

The Committee of Public Safety had stood by during the insurrection because it had wanted to get rid of the *Girondins*; but it was far from desiring any encroachment by the *Commune* on the Convention, whose child it was. It was Danton who was mainly instrumental in the fall of the *Gironde*. His practical instincts had told him that the triumph of federalism would mean civil war, and a division of France in face of the enemy; and his temperamental boldness and contempt for consequences had prompted him to accept the leadership of a movement which was repugnant to his feelings. He had led the opposition to the *Girondins* because he realized that their policy was fatal, not to him and his party alone, but to the State itself. That policy once defeated, his feelings reasserted themselves, and he set himself to save their lives by limiting their punishment to political ostracism, to turn off at once, that is, the tap of insurrection which he had turned on; to continue revolutionary government only so long as it was necessary in the public interest, in other words until the enemies of the republic at home and abroad had been dealt with, and then to return to constitutional conditions.

One of Danton's first cares, therefore, was to push forward the new Constitution under which these conditions would be restored. The Constitution of 1793 was voted 24 to 27 June.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of 1793, passed 24 June, 1793 (Hélie, "Les Constitutions de la France," op. cit. pp. 376 sqq.). This was perhaps the worst of all the French Constitutions; it was a raw and ill-digested piece of work and had it come into operation would have been ruinous. It gave the suffrage to all citizens without qualification; and all political power was concentrated in the hands of the primary assemblies; for the secondary or electoral assemblies only appointed the judges and departmental administrations. The Legislative Body, which was unicameral and sat for one year only, was elected by the primary assemblies in a ballot not necessarily secret; and, to avoid danger from federalism, the departmental organization of the primary assemblies was ignored. The Legislative Body initiated laws, but in most cases these laws were subject to ratification by the primary assemblies, so that government ceased to be representative. The Constitution also was always subject to revision on the initiative of the primary assemblies. The Executive was a Council of Twenty-Four, appointed by the Legislative

Still-born as it was, this was the most democratic of all the Constitutions ; but it was free from all suggestion of socialism, and in consequence provoked the anger of the *Commune*, which was the rallying point of socialism. It was in fact a challenge to the Hébertists. The time for the enforcement of this or any constitution had not, however, yet arrived. So long as the country was in danger exceptional government must prevail. And June, 1793, saw the country in very grave danger. Reaction began to show itself at Marseilles, Bordeaux, and above all at Lyons ; the Vendean insurrection was increasing in scope ; the Republican troops had been defeated at Fontenay (20 May), and the insurgents had seized Saumur on 10 June, so that for the moment Brittany, Normandy, and Maine lay exposed to invasion. The situation was immensely relieved, however, by the failure of the Vendean attack on Nantes.

Nevertheless the whole country remained honeycombed with disaffection, and this at a moment when the position at the front was rapidly becoming desperate. The allies, encouraged by their successes, were gathering in overwhelming strength for the advance on Paris. Their plan was to converge from two directions—from the Belgian frontier, where Coburg was preparing for the reduction of the frontier fortresses, and from the Rhine, where Brunswick was preparing for a westward advance, the only obstacles to which were the garrison of Mainz and the presence of Custine's force behind the lines of Wissemburg in Alsace. Rightly or wrongly,<sup>1</sup> the allies decided to postpone their advance until the outlying fortresses had fallen. Mainz held out till 23 July ; but Coburg drove the French out of Famars (May) and laid siege to Valenciennes. France seemed once more open to invasion. The Dantonist Committee, though it was actually

Body from lists prepared by the electoral (i.e. secondary) assemblies. It held office for two years, and half the members retired each year. The appointment of ministers was in the hands of the Executive. Both the ministers and the members of the Executive Council were mere agents of the Legislative Body.

<sup>1</sup> Wrongly says Mr. Fortescue ("History of the British Army," IV. i. 98). It was Napoleon's opinion (Gourgaud, op. cit. i. 327) that Brunswick could have advanced direct on Paris in 1792, and, if so, why not Coburg in 1793 ?



maturing the plans which ultimately repulsed the invasion, seemed for the moment guilty of military failure. But in the eyes of the extremists, the men of blood to whom reaction meant retribution, this was not the gravest charge against it, but the talk of clemency at home, negotiation abroad, the leniency with which it treated the *Girondins*, and the slackening of the Terror. On 8 July the Committee of Public Safety made a very mild report on the *Girondins*, with the result that two days afterwards in the monthly *renouvellement* Danton completely lost control of that body. He lost his own seat and only two of his followers (Thuriot and Hérault) were elected. The members of the new, or great, Committee were Barrère, Lindet (both original members), Jean Bon-Saint-André, Couthon, Hérault, and St. Just (who had all sat on the earlier Committee), Prieur de la Marne, Thuriot, and Gasparin (new members), the last-named being replaced on 24 July by Robespierre. These changes on the Committee marked the rejection of Danton's conciliatory policy. The new Committee fell gradually under the domination of Robespierre, and for the next twelve months his ascendancy is the most important feature in French politics. The overthrow of Danton was a misfortune comparable only to that of the death of Mirabeau. He alone could have terminated the Revolution and restored normal government. It was most unfortunate that the new series of reverses at the front should have coincided with the introduction of the conciliatory policy. But Danton fell not so much because he proposed conciliation at an unfortunate juncture as because all talk of conciliation filled the Terrorists with alarm.

The men who had supplanted Danton were in a highly precarious position. If Danton's conciliation was terrifying to them, Hébert's violence, his atheism, his socialism, and his advocacy of the supremacy of the *Commune* were more terrifying still. Could they overthrow Hébert without the assistance of Danton, and, if they were obliged to seek Danton's aid, could they escape the dreadful vortex of conciliation? Such was the dilemma of the new rulers. Of one thing there was no doubt: the era of conciliation had ended. In every direction

the Terror was revived with redoubled force. Fierce decrees were passed against the Lyons insurgents and an army of 6000 men was sent against that city. In La Vendée also the war entered a punitive phase. The Norman rebellion in favour of the *Gironde* had already been closed by the skirmish of Vernon (13 July). August and September were the period of hysterical recrimination; Pitt was declared the "enemy of the human race"; English merchandise was excluded from France; reprisals became a part of the policy of the Government; "Terror became the order of the day".

The reverses of July strengthened the Government and seemed to justify its excesses. The murder of Marat (13 July) by a fanatic girl, Charlotte Corday, gave it just the leverage required to complete the destruction of the *Girondins*. On 28 July twenty-one of that party were outlawed and nine others decreed accused. Their arrest, however, was postponed in deference to the known opinions of Danton, for whose support against the Hébertists the Committee was now playing.

The autumn and winter of 1793 saw the ascendancy of the Hébertists with their policy of extended Terror, in which they offended the Dantonists but not the Robespierrists, of predatory legislation, atheism, and glorification of the *Commune*, in which they challenged both Dantonists and Robespierrists. The surrender of Toulon to the English (28 August) and the revolts of Bordeaux and Marseilles gave them their opportunity, and it was by pressure from them that the fierce decrees of the autumn of 1793 were passed. On 23 August, in spite of Danton's protests, a *levée en masse* was decreed, and on 3 September a decree for a forced loan of 1000 millions. The maximum price for corn was reduced and the Maximum extended to many other commodities; the action of the Revolutionary Tribunal was expedited; a "Revolutionary Army" for Paris was decreed, the Paris Sections restored, and a payment of 40 *sous* a day voted to all who attended Section meetings. Billaud and Collot entered the Committee of Public Safety, introducing with them the atmosphere of Hébertism, while on 17 September fresh food for the guillotine was provided by the Law of the Suspect, which defined

suspects and made them liable to trial on a capital charge before any tribunal. On 14 October the Queen was accused before the Revolutionary Tribunal, condemned to death, and executed on 16 October. On the 24th the *Girondins* took their place at the bar, and on the 31st twenty of them went to the scaffold. The rounding up of the *Girondins* continued for many months. Several others, including Mme. Roland, were executed, and some committed suicide. On 6 November Philippe "Egalité," *ci-devant* Duke of Orleans, suffered on the scaffold, and on 12 November good old Bailly paid the penalty for his share in the "massacre" of the *Champ de Mars*. The provincial Terror took a little longer to start. The worst atrocities were committed at Nantes by Carrier, whose barbarities were unspeakable and who adopted the expedient of sinking barges full of his victims in the Loire (November). Carrier's record puts in the shade the minor, but sufficiently terrible, atrocities of Le Bon at Arras and Maignet at Orange. His only real rival was Collot at Lyons.

The month of October which saw the Terror rise to such a pitch witnessed the turn of the tide for republican arms. Toulon indeed held out until 19 December, and Würmser penetrated the lines of Weissemburg, driving the French back on Strassburg; events which led to the appointment of Pichegru to the Army of the Rhine. But the balance of the month's operations was favourable to France. Lyons capitulated on 9 October and was handed over to the tender mercies of Collot and Fouché.<sup>1</sup> In La Vendée the battle of Cholet (16 October) was the beginning of the end, and by the close of the year the rebellion in that quarter was practically over. In the North-East the dallying of the allies before the frontier fortresses had given the French breathing space, and Custine, who had been transferred to the Army of the North

<sup>1</sup> The task of "regenerating" Lyons had first been handed to Couthon; when he proved too mild Collot and Fouché were sent (29 October); they were assisted by 3000 of the Paris Revolutionary Army. On 4 December massacres *en masse* were instituted and in seven *mitrailleurs* 484 persons perished. The lowest estimate of the total number of victims is 1680. M. Madelin in his life of Fouché has shown how his hero, in spite of the fierce language he used, was really a mitigator at Lyons.

in May, had had time to reorganize that army before he was superseded by Kilmaine, and in the autumn the French began to turn the tables on the enemy. For the moment Houchard, who succeeded Kilmaine in July, seemed to be in a very precarious situation: Condé had fallen on 10 July and Valenciennes on the 28th. Houchard was saved by the dissensions of the allies, who, in truth, had little desire to march on Paris. The Duke of York insisted on making an absurd diversion with 40,000 men to besiege Dunkirk. Houchard followed with an army equal in numbers but full of raw volunteers. He caught the allies in detail, defeated the Austrian contingent at Hondschoote on 8 September, but allowed the Duke of York to escape, a blunder for which he was promptly tried and guillotined. Meanwhile le Quesnoy had surrendered to Coburg, and Maubeuge alone of all the frontier fortresses remained intact. The crisis of the war was at hand.

The war in fact divides itself into three periods, of which the third has now been reached. In the first period the battles were won by the troops and generals of the *ancien régime*; the only memorable action was Valmy. With the progress of the Revolution the military conditions gradually changed, the generals of the old regime either being removed or resigning their commands. The introduction of raw volunteers and the continual interference of *représentants en mission* sapped the bases of discipline. This is the second or transitional period (October, 1792, to March, 1793); the French swept forward to the Rhine and over Belgium only to be swept back. The great actions were Jemappes (6 November), where the French snatched a success, and Neerwinden (18 March), where they were defeated. But for the paralysis of the Allies the transition period might have been fatal to France. Now in the autumn of 1793 the transition merges into the third and decisive period. The old regime has given place in many essentials to the new. Much of course remains; the excellent arms, the splendid artillery, and a certain leaven of military tradition supplied by the remnant of the old royal army. But in the main the armies of 1793-4 are revolutionary armies recruited in revolutionary fashion, fed from the immense

chaotic reserve created by the law of 23 August, and led by commanders in sympathy with the new conditions ; Jourdan, Hoche, Pichegru. The volunteers are beginning to "find their legs" and to be found capable, not indeed of the disciplined gallantry of the trained regulars, but of a certain wild valour. And the generals, under the inspiration of Carnot, are beginning to realize how such troops should be led ; the regulations are not cast aside, but modified to suit the new conditions. This period lasts from March, 1793 to January, 1794. The actions are Hondschoote (25 September), Wattignies (16 October), Weissemburg (January), and the Vendean defeats of December, 1793. There follows a subsidiary phase, from January, 1794 to the Peace of Basle (5 April, 1795), which sees the development of Carnot's offensive-defensive, the actions being Turcoing (18 May, 1794) and Fleurus (26 June), which crowned the French triumph. Pichegru's invasion of the United Provinces in the autumn and winter of 1794-5, though marked by no great victory, was of importance equal to Jourdan's rolling back of the Austrians to the Rhine. Just as the two earlier periods were largely dominated by the personality of Dumouriez the later period takes its driving power from Carnot, who, entering the Committee of Public Safety on 14 August, not only remodelled the War Office but actually planned and in some cases—as at Wattignies—personally directed the operations. The vicious tradition of Louis XIV is now completely shaken off. France ceases to waste herself in useless sieges and desultory hostilities. The new strategy and the new type of soldier demanded the concentration of great masses, and the delivery of sledge-hammer blows at single points. Already we are in the atmosphere of Napoleonic warfare. It was in the autumn of 1793 that the military prowess of France was born again.

Carnot's first step was to send commanders of the new school to each of the armies ; Hoche to that of the Moselle, Pichegru to that of the Rhine, and Jourdan (a draper) to that of the North. Carnot himself joined Jourdan and directed the strategy and tactics of the last-named army. We see his strategical influence in the swift and daring concentration of

the army south-west of Maubeuge, and his tactical influence in the novel use he made of the troops in the Battle of Wattignies. After the repulse of the French attack on the 15th he transferred some 8000 men from the left and centre to the right, with the result that the Austrians were completely outwitted and crushed by superior numbers on their left on the following day. The siege of Maubeuge was raised. It was the turning point of the war, the brilliant opening of the final phase.

The excuse of *patrie en danger* no longer holds as a justification for the Terror now that the war enters on this final stage. The excesses are no longer due to the military situation. Yet it was not these excesses that made the Robespierrists grapple with the Hébertists, but the atheism and socialism of the latter and their desire for the supremacy of the *Commune*. To grapple successfully Danton's support was necessary, and Danton gave it willingly, regarding the elimination of the Hébertists as the first step towards the restoration of normal conditions. In fact he desired it for patriotic, Robespierre for political, ends. November witnessed the triumph of atheism. On 10 November Notre Dame was "consecrated" to the worship of Reason, and on 24 November all the Paris churches were closed. Robespierre recognized the unpopularity of these acts of grotesque profanity, and with Danton's aid began to strengthen the Committee of Public Safety for the struggle with Hébert. The Law of 14 Frimaire<sup>1</sup> gave absolute dictatorship to the Com-

<sup>1</sup> The Republican era dated from 22 September, 1792, the date of the establishment of the Republic, which luckily coincided with the autumn equinox; but it only came into force on 28 November, 1793. It remained in force till 30 December, 1805, to the confusion of business men and the annoyance of posterity. Each month had thirty days, and was divided into three *décades*, *décadi* taking the place of Sunday as a day of rest. At the end of each year were added five *jours complémentaires*, or *sansculottides*, as they were afterwards ludicrously called. In An III and in every fourth year afterwards a sixth day was added, called *Jour de la Révolution*. Every 129 years one *Jour de la Révolution* was to be omitted.

This attempt to attain perfect symmetry and jettison tradition was a failure. Romme's pretty childish names for the months were the best feature in the Calendar, which quickly became very confusing, and remains a pitfall for the unwary. Many historians have tried to provide a simple

mittee. It was Danton who passed it. He hoped to capture the Committee and use it for the establishment of normal conditions. For a time it looked as if he would succeed. In November a number of minor Hébertists were arrested, and in December a great sensation was created by the publication of the "Vieux Cordelier," a series of pamphlets advocating clemency, the work of Danton's friend Camille Desmoulins. Robespierre himself almost went with the tide, and was only stiffened into resistance by his colleagues Collot and St. Just. It was determined to strike at Hébert first, then at Danton. On 17 March, therefore, the Hébertists were seized, dragged before the Revolutionary Tribunal, condemned, and (24 March) executed.

As if to prove that this was no inauguration of clemency the Committee at once rounded on the Dantonists. On 30 March they, in turn, were arrested, and on 5 April perished with their

table for the calculation of the Gregorian date from the Republican Calendar, but without success. The year was supposed to begin on 22 September, but in 1795 and in 1799 and subsequent years Vendémiaire fell on 23 September, while in 1803 (An XII) it fell on the 24th. The fact that the year 1800 was not a leap year in the Gregorian calendar was a source of confusion. No precise rule, therefore, can be given for the calculation of the Gregorian dates. The following table is only a rough guide, applying to a bare majority of the dates; anyone who wants to be sure of accuracy should refer to one of the many complete tables, e.g. to Lalanne, "Dictionnaire historique de la France". See also Mathieu, "Concordance de l'Ère Grégorienne avec l'Ère Républicaine" (1819), and "Concordance des Calendriers Grégorien et Républicain" in "Annuaire historique" (Société de l'histoire de France, 1841-2).

To the number of the day in—

<i>Vendémiaire</i> add 21 to get the number of the day in September.					
<i>Brumaire</i>	21	"	"	"	October.
<i>Frimaire</i>	20	"	"	"	November.
<i>Nivôse</i>	20	"	"	"	December.
<i>Pluviôse</i>	19	"	"	"	January.
<i>Ventôse</i>	18	"	"	"	February.
<i>Germinal</i>	20	"	"	"	March.
<i>Florial</i>	19	"	"	"	April.
<i>Prairial</i>	19	"	"	"	May.
<i>Messidor</i>	18	"	"	"	June.
<i>Thermidor</i>	18	"	"	"	July.
<i>Fructidor</i>	17	"	"	"	August.

leader on the scaffold. Danton's is undoubtedly the greatest figure that passes over the revolutionary stage. His vast energy, administrative capacity, and genius for carrying things through, his disregard for everything save the main issue, his sincerity and his patriotism, distinguish him from the common herd of dreamers and self-seekers. He was not ambitious so much as conscious of his own power. He had two great ideals: that of France triumphant over her enemies and recognized by Europe; and that of France internally restored and in her right mind. With these ideals before him he was blind to all else; blind to the atrocities of the Terror and even stooping to justify the September massacres, and blind to the danger of setting up a committee with dictatorial powers. That a man so single-eyed should fall into grievous mistakes was inevitable, and he paid for his mistakes with his life. He remains almost the single grand figure among the leaders of the Revolution.

With the removal of Danton, Robespierre becomes the most conspicuous figure on the revolutionary stage. What did his supremacy mean? It meant the maintenance of the Terror and revolutionary government whose end Danton had desired; but it meant a regularized Terror and a revolutionary government purged of Hébertism, free from the taint of socialism, and purified from atheism. It meant, at first at any rate, the continued supremacy of the Convention through its committees, and it was on the Convention rather than on the great Committee that Robespierre relied for support. It meant above all the supremacy of Robespierre and the imposition of Robespierre's ideals upon the nation. For here was a man ambitious in quite another sense to the sense in which Danton had been ambitious. Robespierre was a man with an ideal, a fanatic. He was perhaps the strangest person that ever—even for a brief period—dominated a great nation. For with imperturbable complacency he believed himself to possess the secret which would solve all the problems of France; he evolved a standard of virtue of his own and set himself to impose it on the nation by the simple expedient of killing all who did not attain to it. Yet he was not so much bloodthirsty as callous and regardless of human life where his ideals were at stake. Above all he



was a religious fanatic. He had compassed the destruction of the *Girondins*, the Dantonists, and the Hébertists, largely because of his intense hatred of their atheism. In the decay of Catholicism he had conceived a religion of his own and now his ambition was to impose it on France and to appear as its high-priest. The Terror was to continue until the "Reign of Virtue" had been thus established. Whether Robespierre would ultimately have had the courage to stop the guillotine and face the inevitable reaction it is hard to say.

It is curious to picture this precise little bourgeois rubbing shoulders in the Committee with such ruffians as Collot and Billaud, this dreamer sharing the labours of Carnot, this man of academic speech listening to the bombastic rhetoric of Barrère ; still more curious to find that he was able to impose himself on his colleagues as in some degree their master ; and to reflect that he found his chief support in the lower middle classes and in the moderates of the Convention who recognized in him a bulwark against predatory legislation. Robespierre was a man of contradictions, and in spite of all that has been written about him he still remains to a great extent an enigma.

The period 5 April to 27 July, during which Robespierre was practically supreme, is much confused by the condition of flux into which parties fell, and out of which they emerged in the new combination which overwhelmed him. The main lines of Robespierre's policy stand out amidst the political confusion. He would establish the "Reign of Virtue" by quickening the Terror. The natural medium for this quickening was the Revolutionary Tribunal. On 15 April, therefore, the provincial tribunals were suppressed, and all cases of conspiracy were referred to the Paris Tribunal, while on 10 June (22 Prairial) the action of the latter was expedited by the withdrawal of counsel from prisoners, the introduction of trial in groups, the admission of all forms of evidence, and the extension to all citizens of the right of denunciation. Thus France was brought under what was really martial law in its most stringent form : martial law without real military necessity and wielded by politicians for political ends. Such was the weapon with which Robespierre proposed to establish the Reign of Virtue.

Meanwhile he was occupied in the prosecution of the second item in his policy. Like Napoleon he believed in religion as a political necessity, and on 8 June he solemnized a great fête in honour of "the Supreme Being," in which he himself played the principal part. These two days in June (8th and 10th) mark the height of Robespierre's ascendancy. His two ideals—the Reign of Virtue as taught by the fête of the Supreme Being and the Reign of Terror as vindicated by the Law of 22 Prairial—seemed to be on the way to realization. But they had aroused alarm in two different quarters: the remnant of the Hébertists, together with all those who saw the ridiculous side of the tawdry fête and deprecated the idea of accepting Robespierre as "God as well as master," were provoked to resistance; and mutterings of opposition began to make themselves heard even from his colleagues in the Committee, where Billaud in particular was opposed to him. On the other hand the quickening of the Terror, at a moment when whatever military necessity for it had ever existed was rapidly vanishing, made men ask themselves where it was going to end.

For the change which had come over the war with the advent of Carnot and the really important victory of Wattignies had been developing rapidly. Pichegru and Hoche had been successful in the eastern theatre. They had relieved Landau and Strassburg and (28 December) driven the allies from the lines of Wissemburg. A little earlier (19 December) the Siege of Toulon had been brought to a satisfactory conclusion, thanks largely to the capacity and determination of Napoleon Bonaparte, then a major of artillery. In the same month the last armies of the Vendéans were cut to pieces. In the spring of 1794 Pichegru was transferred to the Army of the North where he had 130,000 against the allies' 148,000. The loss of Landrecies led to his reinforcement from the Army of the Rhine, with the result that the left wing defeated the allies at Turcoing (15 May) while Pichegru himself took Ypres (17 June). In May Jourdan took command of a new army—that of the Sambre and Meuse; he forced the passage of the Sambre after six attempts and took

Charleroi. Coburg, marching to the relief of that town, attacked him near Fleurus (26 June). After ten hours' fighting the French, who fought superbly, were victorious. This great victory completely dislocated the plans of the Allies, and the French armies overran the Low Countries. During the entire autumn the Allies were on the run, and in October Pichegru invaded the United Provinces and did not stop until Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and the Hague had fallen, and Moreau's cavalry had captured the Dutch fleet in the ice off Texel. Meanwhile Jourdan drove the Austrians over the Rhine and the Prussians evacuated the Vosges.

While fortune was thus smiling on the French armies, the fleet upon which high hopes had been built had been completely defeated by Lord Howe on 1 June. But France had ample compensations ashore. It was not only on the Rhine and in Belgium and Holland that she was victorious; in Italy also her arms seemed to be on the road to a future triumph. The seizure of Nice and Savoy had precipitated hostilities with Sardinia, and two armies<sup>1</sup> had been sent to the south-west frontier in 1792. During that year they were on the defensive, but in 1793 Kellermann drove the Sardinians over the Mont Cenis: the French were not, however, able to force the passes into Piedmont. The Army of the Alps lay before the Mont Cenis and Little St. Bernard, while the Army of Italy, under Brunet, was knocking its head against Saorgio and the great redoubt of Anthion which commanded the Col di Tenda, the easiest access to the valley of the Stura. At the close of the year the French lay in a wide semi-circle at the foot of the Alps unable to force a passage; and Dumerbion, "a fumbling nonentity,"<sup>2</sup> took over the command.

Dumerbion's feebleness, however, was amply balanced by the energy of Saliceti, Ricord, and Robespierre (*le jeune*), the *représentants en mission*, and the military skill of Bonaparte. The latter, who had been promoted after Toulon to the rank of general of artillery, became their confidential adviser. To

<sup>1</sup> The Army of the Alps and the Army of Italy.

<sup>2</sup> Dumerbion, it was said, divided his time between bed, the table, and the comedy.

their energy and his skill may be traced the change in the tone of the operations in 1794. It had occurred to Brunet in 1793 that in order to take Saorgio it would be necessary to make an eastward turning movement; the difficulty was that this involved a violation of Genoa, and Genoa was important as the source of supplies for the army. In 1793-4 there was considerable interruption of these supplies owing to raids from the intervening Sardinian territory of Oneglia, and the idea of a turning movement was now revived with the double object of seizing Oneglia and turning Saorgio. Both objects were effected: Oneglia fell to Masséna on 9 April, and Saorgio surrendered on the 29th. The way into Piedmont was open. To cope with the 40,000 Sardinians, however, (and possible Austrian reinforcements), it was necessary to bring the Army of the Alps into touch with that of Italy. But the invasion of Italy was not favoured by Carnot; the independent action of the *représentants* offended him and accentuated his growing antagonism to Robespierre. The plans for concentration and offensive were countermanded. Thus matters stood in Thermidor, 1794.

So long as the pretext of *patrie en danger* existed men had accepted the Terror as a kind of maladministered martial law, but the victories of 1794 made it impossible to plead military necessity. Fleurus made 22 Prairial look ridiculous. With French arms overrunning the Low Countries the cry of national danger became farcical. That there should be a widespread reaction against the Terror was only natural: it was contemporaneous with the set against Robespierre's religious policy. The union of these two forces brought about his downfall. The kaleidoscopic movements of political parties that preceded the crisis of 9 Thermidor are too complicated to fall within the scope of this work. Broadly speaking, a strong anti-Robespierrist party had grown up on the left of the Convention; it included all the remnants of the Hébertists and Dantonists and its leaders were Tallien, Legendre, Barras, and Fouché. So long as Robespierre continued to enjoy the support of the "Plain" or centre of the Convention his enemies were powerless, but it was gradually coming home to

the men of the Plain that even they were not safe from the tyranny. Outside the Convention the *Commune* had rallied to Robespierre, in the Committees a powerful minority favoured his overthrow. When Robespierre's principal lieutenant St. Just (22 July) advocated a dictatorship, the opposition to Robespierre was consolidated. The Committees, however, were in a dilemma. They wanted to overthrow their colleague without jeopardizing their own supremacy; and it was improbable that the fall of the tyrant could be accomplished without the simultaneous fall of the instruments of tyranny, of which the Committees were the chief. Hence the otherwise unaccountable behaviour of Robespierre's opponents on the Committee, Carnot, Lindet and Billaud. Robespierre had the support of the courageous and fanatical St. Just and that of the cripple Couthon; their policy was to purge but preserve the Committees. On 26 July Robespierre delivered a speech in the Convention which made many heads feel insecure on many shoulders. This was a mistake; he should have struck at once without threatening.

All the discordant elements of opposition now began to coalesce in self-defence and, when on the 27th St. Just mounted the tribune, he was greeted by a storm of organized opposition. The victory went to the loudest throats. The Robespierrists were denied a hearing, and after a scene of great violence Robespierre was decreed accused, and placed under arrest. He had now two alternatives open to him, to remain quietly under guard and rely on the known good-will of the Revolutionary Tribunal, or to break his arrest, throw himself on the support of the *Commune*, and lead the armed force of Paris, which the *Commune* controlled, against the Convention. He made the fatal mistake of adopting a middle course. He did indeed break his arrest and go to the Hôtel de Ville; but instead of adopting strong measures against the Convention he did nothing. His desire to observe legal forms and avoid all semblance of a *coup d'état* was his undoing. The Convention now prepared to attack the *Commune*. Robespierre was outlawed and Barras put in command of the troops. Barras acted with considerable vigour. The occu-

pants of the Hôtel de Ville had not reckoned on this and were taken completely by surprise. In the scuffle which occurred when Barras' forces broke into the Hôtel de Ville Robespierre was wounded, whether by his own hand or not it is impossible to say. On the next day (10 Thermidor, 28 July) the Robespierrists with their already half-dead leader were executed amidst every evidence of popular approval.

The history of the crisis of Thermidor and its consequences is one of the most instructive and intricate studies in the history of the Revolution. The fall of Robespierre had been compassed in the main by his colleagues, men who had shared in the Terror and desired its continuance, and who were quite as bloody as, and far more degraded than, Robespierre himself. They had revolted not against the system but against the ends towards which the "dictator" had been directing it. Alone they would have been unable to effect his destruction, and had consequently been obliged to co-operate with the "Thermidorians," men who like them hoped for the continuance of the Terror but desired to direct it themselves, and who therefore, after Thermidor, set themselves to destroy in turn Robespierre's colleagues with whom they had allied themselves during the crisis. But even the conjunction of the Thermidorians and the "Dissident Terrorists"<sup>1</sup> would not have sufficed, and they were obliged to call in the assistance of a third body of men who desired the downfall of the tyrant for yet another reason—in order that the system of which he had been the most prominent exponent might perish with him, that the Terror might cease, and the ascendancy of the Convention be restored. This body was the "Plain," the large mass of moderate deputies which had so long wavered in the centre of the Convention, and which had so hesitatingly, but withal so decisively, intervened during the crisis of Thermidor.

Behind the Plain was the great dammed up force of public opinion, eagerly looking for the termination of the terrible system which it had suffered so long; and the situation after Thermidor resolves itself into a struggle between the three

<sup>1</sup> The phrase—a very convenient one—is borrowed from Lord Acton.

parties, the Terrorists, the Thermidorian or Dissident Terrorists, and the Plain, for the control of the sluice behind which public opinion was confined. For men like Collot and Billaud the object was to close the small outlet which had been opened at Thermidor; to them the display of popular feeling, and the relief in Paris at the disappearance of the "Tyrant," were causes of chagrin and alarm. The Thermidorians, on the other hand, set themselves to raise the sluice yet a little farther, to release sufficient of the flood to sweep away the old *personnel*, still without injury to the system, then to close it and themselves appropriate the system. Finally the Plain desired to open the floodgates wide, and release such an overwhelming volume of public opinion as would sweep away the system with its authors and liberate France from the incubus of the Terror. The history of the period between July, 1794, and October, 1795, shows us this struggle in progress; very soon it becomes clear that, such a sluice once opened, no matter how little, it is easier to open it farther than to close it. For a time the Terrorists make a good fight, but gradually the Moderates (that is the Plain) assert their superiority, strengthen themselves in the Convention, and destroy one by one the props of the system until the whole fabric is tottering to its fall. The cry for vengeance follows the cry for mercy and rises *crescendo*, in spite of two violent attempts to challenge by insurrection the growing ascendancy of the Convention. Terror and Terrorists are swept away without pause and without compunction. The tiny aperture had released a flood which once released could not be confined again.

With the restoration to its normal functions of public opinion, and the downfall of the system of government which, however vile and terrible, had at any rate been strong and successful, there arose a strong body of feeling in favour of Constitutional Monarchy. For a time we seem to be back in 1789. Then a new cleavage becomes apparent; the cleavage between Regicides and Monarchists. There were hundreds of politicians whose hands were not red with the bloodshed in the Terror, who were yet bedabbled with the blood of the Bourbons—the whole remnant of the *Girondins*, for instance, who had voted

for the King's death. To them restoration meant retribution. The reaction against the Terror slackens, and the men of 1793 begin to lift their heads again. Then on 8 June, 1795, occurs the curiously opportune death of Louis XVII (whom we have known as "the Dauphin"),<sup>1</sup> followed by the failure of his uncles to conciliate moderate feeling in France. The "Republic is consecrated" and it only remains for the Convention to draw up the constitution under which France shall emerge from the revolutionary period. A bicameral bourgeois constitution is devised and carried, with the executive power in the hands of an emasculated Committee of Public Safety called a Directory. Then at the last moment the Convention, scared once more by the spectre of Royalism, usurps to itself the domination of the new legislature by decreeing that two-thirds of its number shall have seats therein. The insurrection of Vendémiaire follows, in the main a monarchist protest against this republican usurpation. It is suppressed by the energy of Barras and Bonaparte, suppressed, that is, curiously enough by the very man who was four years later to overthrow the Government which he then saved.

The intricate combination of parties which was sketched at the outset of the preceding summary, very quickly fell asunder; but for a time it was able to act together for the destruction of the dregs of Robespierre's party. That the victory was not to be for the "Dissident Terrorists," however, was quickly demonstrated by the reconstruction on milder lines of the Revolutionary Tribunal and the repeal of the Law of 22 Prairial. From this date (1 August) the grim shadow of the guillotine was lifted from the capital. For the time being the profit of the *coup d'état* seemed to be accruing to the Thermidorians, who on 31 July captured the Committee of Public Safety, Tallien, Treilhard, Bréard, and Thuriot obtaining seats. But the pendulum quickly swung towards the Moderates, who, on 23 August, arranged for a complete reorganization of the committees of the Convention. The Committee of Public Safety was reduced to a comparatively innocuous sphere of activity, and its power, which it

<sup>1</sup> *Infra*, p. 55.



had hitherto shared with the *Comité de Sûreté Générale*, distributed among sixteen committees. This was the first blow to the system. It was quickly followed by others.

The *représentants en mission* had their powers curtailed (12 and 28 August). Clubs and popular societies were placed under regulations (the Jacobins' Club being closed on 12 November), the Revolutionary Committees were reduced in number, so that in place of forty-eight Paris had henceforth no more than twelve. The municipality of Paris was abolished on 27 July, but the Section Assemblies were allowed to stand. The command of the National Guard was placed in commission. The Terrorists and the more violent of the Thermidorians were aghast at the extent of the reaction, but in face of public opinion could do little to resist it. The impeachment of Carrier for the atrocities he had committed at Nantes brought their alarm to a head; for if Carrier were to be condemned there was no knowing who would come next. The Terrorists began to tremble for their own safety. To avert the danger with which they had been threatened by Robespierre they had let loose an even more terrible danger. The Moderates of the Convention, in conjunction with the more moderate section of the Thermidorians, were now in full swing of reaction and on 9 December, to add force to their policy and make sure of a majority, they secured the release of seventy-three deputies who had been imprisoned for protesting against 2 June, 1793. This sealed the fate of the Terrorists and marks the moment of transition on the part of the Plain from rehabilitation to vengeance. The first results were the repeal of the Maximum, which was indeed rendered imperative by the appalling destitution and misery that prevailed in the capital (23 December), and the offer of peace on generous terms to the Vendéan rebels. The Peace of La Jaunaie was concluded in February, 1795, the two main points for which the Vendéans had fought so gallantly being conceded, freedom of religion and freedom from compulsory service (the latter on condition that they raised a small militia). At the same time the royal *assignats* circulated in La Vendée were recognized and redeemed. Stofflet held out until 2 May, when he accepted similar terms at Saint Florent.

Meanwhile the spoliation of the relations of *émigrés* was stopped (21 December) and negotiations for peace were opened with Prussia and Tuscany. Finally, on 21 February, on the motion of Grégoire, an attempt was made to settle the vexed question of religion. Toleration under severe restrictions was accorded to all cults (Law of 3 Ventôse). While the reaction was taking place at home hostilities were resumed at the front. The Austrians had taken the offensive in Italy, but were repulsed on 21 September at Dego by Dumerbion, who attributed much of his success to his artillery commander. This commander was Bonaparte, who, arrested after Thermidor,<sup>1</sup> had been released on 20 August and was now applying his intellect to the problems of the Italian campaign. Carnot, however, gave instructions that the advantage gained in the action of Dego should not be followed up, and once more the army of Italy stood on the defensive.

The Terrorists at home were by this time thoroughly alarmed at the extent of the reaction; the continued scarcity, which had even been temporarily enhanced rather than mitigated by the hasty repeal of the Maximum, kept Paris in a state of chronic unrest, and when on 2 March it was proposed to send Billaud, Collot, Barrère, and Vadier before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and when on 8 May the surviving *Girondin* deputies were restored to the Convention, they determined to strike. On 1 April (12 Germinal) a mob, instigated by the Jacobins and mad with hunger and misery, broke into the Convention and cried out for "Bread and the Constitution of '93". But they did little more than shout and quickly dispersed on the approach of some battalions of the National Guard. This sealed the fate of the accused Terrorists, whose deportation was immediately decreed, and sixteen others (including Léonard Bourdon, Cambon, Amar, and Lecointre) were at once arrested. The moderate reaction was resumed with increased vigour. The National Guard was purged of the lower classes, the departmental organization was revived, and the remaining *Girondins* reinstated (11 April). On 3 May the

<sup>1</sup> He was deprived of his rank of general and imprisoned at Fort Carré, near Antibes.

property of all victims of the Terror (since 10 March, 1793) was restored to their relations with the exception of that of *émigrés*, while reparation was also made to many of the relations of *émigrés*. Gold and silver were restored to the position of current coin on 25 April.

Even more significant than any of these measures was the return of France to the ordinary paths of diplomacy. War had been the excuse for the Terror, and if the Terror was to cease war—at any rate on the old regardless scale—must cease also. The Government therefore sought a way by which France might re-enter the diplomatic comity of nations. If Europe would recognize her right to manage her own affairs she would abandon her claim to enforce liberty throughout Europe at the point of the bayonet. Barthélemy was sent to negotiate with Prussia and on 5 April his mission resulted in the Peace of Basle. Prussia agreed that the troublesome question of the dispossessed princes on the left bank of the Rhine should be remitted to a European congress, but stipulated for compensation on the right bank for any losses. France in return recognized a line of demarcation which gave Prussia control of Northern Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Peace with Holland (16 May) on terms very favourable to France followed peace with Prussia. And in July came peace with Spain, France evacuating Spain and receiving compensation in San Domingo (22 July). These modifications of the diplomatic relations of France were items in the struggle

<sup>1</sup> Prussia did not cede the left bank at the Peace of Basle. She consented to the occupation by the French armies of the territories on that bank of which they were already in possession. The ultimate decision rested with the Imperial Diet, and Prussia stipulated for compensation on the right bank for any losses on the left bank which the Diet might impose on her. Prussia had refused to work for France in this. The dispossessed princes, whose claims gave so much trouble, were those Princes of the Empire who had lands on both banks of the Rhine, and who were threatened with considerable losses on the left bank owing to recent French legislation. Their rights were guaranteed by the Empire, and they naturally appealed to the Diet. Among them were the Bishops of Mainz, Trier, Cologne, Speyer, and Basle, the Margrave of Baden, the Dukes of Würtemberg and Deux-Ponts, and the Landgrave of Hesse Darmstadt.

between the Terrorists and the anti-Terrorists ; but now there arose symptoms of a new struggle between Monarchists and Republicans. The idea of a return to monarchy was by no means dead, and by the relaxation of the Terror the Moderates (i.e. the restored *Girondins* and Plain) let loose once more the spectre of Royalism. In the spring of 1795 the "White Terror," a movement mainly Royalist, broke out in the South and at Lyons, Aix, Avignon, Arles, Marseilles, and Toulon, Terrorists were lynched by an infuriated mob spurred on by Royalist agents. This resurrection of royalism created a quite new situation and made the Moderates pause. Moderation and the termination of the Terror was one thing ; Royalism was another, and the *Girondins* and the majority of the Convention generally were as much regicides as the Jacobins. In face of this new danger the moderate reaction failed, and the Convention began to draw away from public opinion. The Committee of Public Safety was once more strengthened, reactionary legislation ceased, and the persecution of Jacobins and Terrorists was relaxed. This heralded a great rally of all the discontented parties against the Convention. On 20 May (1 Prairial) the hall was once more invaded and, but for the admirable conduct of Boissy d'Anglas in the chair, serious bloodshed might have occurred. As it was one deputy was assassinated and the Convention was captured by the incendiaries, who were, however, in turn driven out by the National Guard ; when on the following day the attack on the Convention was renewed it was met by General Menou and 20,000 regular troops, who had no difficulty in restoring order.

This was a signal triumph for the Moderates over the Jacobins and led to renewed and final measures against the latter. The Revolutionary Tribunal, the last remaining emblem of the Terror, already emasculated, was now abolished, the National Guard was further purged, and sixty-two extremists were arrested for participation in the plot. The failure of the insurrection of Prairial seemed to bring a restoration very near, and the struggle resolved itself from a contest between Jacobins and *Girondins* into one between Royalists and Repub-

licans. Many of the sanest public men<sup>1</sup> were favourably inclined to a restoration, which, as the King was a frail boy, could have been effected on almost any terms they liked; public opinion was not unfavourable, only the Regicides, who feared for their own heads, held aloof. To a majority perhaps of active politicians a restoration was personally dangerous. Then in June, as has already been said, occurred one of those sudden catastrophes that turn the course of history. Just at the moment when the fortunes of his house seemed to be once more in the ascendant, Louis XVII died (10 June, 1795). He had been kept a prisoner in the Temple, had been hideously ill-treated during the Terror, and obtained only slight relief after Thermidor; no government which contained a majority of Regicides could contemplate his continued existence with equanimity, yet no government whose mission was to end the Terror could send him to the scaffold. His death occurred at a moment so opportune that it lent colour to many rumours. Some said he did not die at all, some said he was made away with. The truth seems to be that he died on 10 June, 1795, in consequence of years of narrow confinement and callous maltreatment. He was murdered just as much as if an assassin's knife had been employed, and all the governments which were in turn responsible for him must bear the blame, the Thermidorians as well as the Terrorists, the Convention as much as the Committee of Public Safety.

As it was, this event "consecrated the Republic" and the hope which had run so high of a Constitutional and Monarchical settlement was dashed to the ground. The Bourbons indeed made a luckless attempt to revive the war in the west. An expedition of *émigrés*, led by the Comte de Puisaye, sailed from England in June and landed at Carnac, where it was joined by many of the Chouans (gangs of Breton smugglers), but by none of the Vendéans proper. Hoche destroyed it in the Peninsula of Quiberon on 21 July, but stained his victory by the wholesale massacre of the prisoners. More than 600 were shot in cold blood by order of Tallien. A further Royalist expedition, made in the following month and this time accom-

<sup>1</sup> See Acton, "Lectures on The French Revolution," op. cit. p. 337.

panied by the Comte d'Artois, was even less successful, for, after committing Charette and Stofflet to a renewal of the Vendean insurrection, the Count cravenly sailed away without striking a blow and left his allies in the lurch. Stofflet and Charette were both eventually captured and executed as the result of putting their trust in this pusillanimous prince (February to March, 1796).

Meanwhile a committee of the Convention had been engaged in the construction of a new Constitution. The committee had reported on 23 June and the Constitution was adopted on 17 August.<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of the Year III was a boldly moderate attempt to end the Revolution and

<sup>1</sup> The Constitution of the Year III was a great improvement on the earlier Constitutions. The suffrage indeed was given to all citizens, but citizens were defined as persons of twenty-five who paid direct taxes (and all persons who had served their country at the front whether taxpayers or not). Such citizens were also eligible for all offices. The Primary Assemblies had the right to reject or accept all constitutional acts in secret ballot, and they also appointed the secondary electors who were subject to a considerable and elaborate property qualification. These secondary electors appointed all officials as well as the members of the two houses of the Legislative Body, for the Legislature became bicameral. The *Anciens* (250 in number, and whose members had to be over forty years of age and to have been domiciled fifteen years in France) had the right to reject or accept, but not to amend, the acts of the *Cinq Cents*, who—500 in number—were over thirty years of age and domiciled ten years in France; they too were chosen by the secondary electors. One-third of each council retired annually. No member could sit for more than six consecutive years. No permanent committees were allowed. Members received salaries. The Executive was in the hands of a Directory of five nominated by the *Anciens* from lists prepared by the *Cinq Cents*. They had to be over forty years of age and to have sat either in the Legislature or the ministry. One Director, chosen by lot, retired each year and was not re-eligible for five years. The Directory had full executive powers (with the exception of the right to command armies, sit in the Legislature, and control finances). The Directors appointed the Ministry. One or two points in the Constitution are interesting in view of later events. Article 102 put the power of changing the place of assembly of the Legislature in the hands of the *Anciens*—a provision which was of service at Brumaire. No troops were to come within twelve leagues of the Legislature. A notable feature of this Constitution (which was full of good intentions) was the inclusion of a list of duties as an offset to the now stereotyped list of rights.

establish an orderly government. Freed from the tyranny of terror under which it had laboured since 1792, public opinion might be expected to work out its own salvation through the new Constitution, only partially democratic though that was. When they realized this, the regicide members of the Convention were once more overcome with fear at the possibility of a development in the direction of monarchy and they immediately proceeded to stultify their own handiwork by passing the "Decrees of Fructidor," which enacted that two-thirds of the Convention, to be chosen by the Primary Assemblies, were to sit in the new Legislature. On 23 September, amidst much angry protest against this act of usurpation, the Constitution was decreed.

The struggle which now ensued was one between the upholders of the Republic at all costs and the advocates of Constitutional Monarchy. Both sides armed; forty-four of the Sections of Paris, supported by the National Guard, rose against the Convention. Barras undertook the defence, and all the dregs of the Terror were released and requisitioned for its protection. The prospects seemed favourable for the insurrectionaries until Barras decided to send for artillery. Forty pieces were brought up for the defence of the Convention; the marks of their shot may still be seen on the Church of St. Roch. Not only had Barras cannon but he had an expert and determined artillerist at his elbow in the shape of Bonaparte. A few discharges of grape shot soon dispersed the insurrectionaries, and Vendémiaire ended in a victory for the usurping Convention; thus the new regime was founded on physical force.

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Of the memoirs an amazing number, including those of Fouché, Barras, and Robespierre, are not authentic. Even those of Malouet, Dumont, Bertrand, Madame Campan, Madame Roland, Fersen, and Ferrières are more or less rejected by Lord Acton.



## CHAPTER XXX

### THE DIRECTORY AND CONSULATE

(1795-1801)

WE arrive thus at what was intended to be the term of the Revolution. Revolutionary government had outstayed its welcome ; its disappearance at Thermidor had been greeted with unqualified approval ; and, after an interregnum of a year, a serious attempt had been made to provide France with a new form of government which should be at once stable at home and strong abroad, and should have the strength of the old government together with that constitutional form which seemed the best guarantee of moderation. The establishment of a bicameral legislative system, based on a qualified suffrage and with a separate Executive appointed by the Legislative Body, indicated a genuine attempt to profit by the lessons of the Revolution and to base the new government on secure foundations.

Unfortunately, however, it is impossible to wipe out three years of national history, especially years such as those which had just passed ; to erase the deeds of a Committee of Public Safety by a stroke of the pen and revert to constitutional government. Those who deplore the disappearance of the French Revolution in the blood and smoke of a European cataclysm of vast proportions, who lament the crushing of the era of political "freedom" under the heel of a dictator, may well ask themselves whether the blunders of the Revolution could have had any other end, whether Bonaparte was not their logical outcome and whether a gigantic "blood bath" was not the only escape from the impasse into which the Revolution had conducted the country.

The complete failure of the Directorial government—the great attempt of the Revolution to end itself—goes a long way to prove this. By the clearest of all arguments, that of self-preservation, the Conventionals of 1794 were precluded from basing the new government on the bed-rock of popular approval. As the blood of Danton had choked Robespierre so the blood of the Terror choked them; and those whom that blood did not choke were choked by the blood of the Bourbons. The Thermidorians had to pay the shot of the rake's progress of the previous years. Thus, quite against their will, they had been driven to the act of usurpation just recorded, to give to their constitutional government all the defects of revolutionary government, to make it ostensibly representative, yet not truly parliamentary, to take away from it the driving power of conscious principle, to make it, while professing to be sincere, a mockery and a sham, as arbitrary as the Committee of Public Safety and as devoid of popular sanction, and at the same time destitute of the grim strength which had been the only justification of the "horrid arbitrariness" of the great Committee. We enter then a period which could end only in failure, when there is neither order nor liberty nor strength nor moderation. The Directory endured for four years, but only because it had the strength of despair, and was fighting all the time for its life.

The result of the elections to the new *Corps Législatif* was instructive; the "new-third" included many names well known in the earlier stages of the Revolution, men of moderate views and recognized respectability, while the "usurping" two-thirds included the more moderate of the Conventionals. The necessity for making up the requisite number<sup>1</sup> transferred the majority in the new body to the Revolutionary (or Conventional) party. Thus that body was not a true reflection of public opinion. Which way that opinion was flowing was demonstrated in the election of the new-third.

<sup>1</sup> Two-thirds of the *Corps Législatif* was 493, but the electors only returned 389 ex-Conventionals. This put the game in the hands of the "Revolutionaries," for the elected Conventionals proceeded to co-opt 104 others.

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The *Anciens* were next elected; then the directors were appointed. Sieyès, the real author of the Constitution, declined office, which devolved on Larévellière-Lépeaux, Rewbell, Barras, Letourneur, and Carnot: this was the first victory of the "Conventional" majority; all five were ex-Conventionals, all five were Regicides.

Carnot, who had been saved by the sheer greatness of his abilities from the fate of his fellows of the Committee of Public Safety, had learnt wisdom; ex-Terrorist though he was, he was the most moderate of the directors, and identified himself with the "new-third" (i.e. with popular opinion). He was steadily supported by Letourneur, the least conspicuous of the five directors. On the side of the "two-thirds" or "Revolutionaries" were Barras, Larévellière, and Rewbell. Barras was at once the most flashy, unscrupulous, and corrupt of the directors and at the same time the most fearless. He combined all the vices of the noblesse of the *ancien régime* (of which he was a member) with those of the typical Revolutionary; he set the tone of tinsel luxury, licentiousness, and corruption which we are accustomed to associate with the Directory; Larévellière-Lépeaux was a narrow and rather atrabilious ex-*Girondin*, almost a monomaniac on the subject of Christianity, which he detested;<sup>1</sup> Rewbell was the brain of the Conventional triumvirate in the Directory. He was a violent Revolutionary, and would have liked to reproduce the Committee of Public Safety in the new government. The history of the next years may be described as the struggle of this triumvirate to retain power in the face of steadily increasing opposition.

Under these conditions the government speedily developed all the worst features of an unbridled oligarchy. It was tyrannical, corrupt, and inefficient; much less efficient and incomparably more corrupt than the Committee of Public Safety, and only less tyrannical because absolute tyranny was out of its reach. It controlled all the civil and military appoint-

<sup>1</sup> "The *Vicaire Savoyard* in office," says Sorel ("L'Europe et la Révolution française," op. cit. v. 9).

ments, the ministers<sup>1</sup> being mere agents; its patronage was an arid wilderness of jobbery, while its diplomacy was disgraced by offers of enormous bribes to the representatives of foreign states. At home the Government did not scruple to foment civil discord in order to divide the opposition. Abroad it sought eagerly any pretext for diverting men's minds from its own evil deeds, and therefore identified itself with a war-like policy, though the idea of a propagandist *guerre d'outrance* with Europe had by this time been abandoned in favour of the ideal of natural frontiers.<sup>2</sup>

The respective treaties with Prussia, Holland, and Spain by which the coalition against France was broken up<sup>3</sup> had been the work of the Thermidorian government, but the Directory had adopted and extended this policy, and before the close of 1795 the only active enemies were Austria, Sardinia, England, and Russia. Thus the character of the war had completely changed: France was no longer fighting to preserve her geographical integrity, nor for a principle, nor even to bring the "blessings of freedom" to her neighbours. Henceforth she fought to extend her territories,<sup>4</sup> to feed armies which could not otherwise be supported, to keep them out of France, where their appearance might herald the overthrow of the Directory, and also to provide a distraction for the people which should blind them to the iniquities of the Government.

This change in the character of the war was contemporaneous with the completion of a change which had gradually been

<sup>1</sup> The ministers were:—

Justice—Merlin of Douai.

Interior—Bénézeck.

War—Aubert Dubayet.

Foreign Affairs—Delacroix.

Marine—Truguet.

Finance—Faupoult, succeeded by Ramel de Nogaret.

<sup>2</sup> This ideal had been set up by the decree of 24 October, 1792, which declared that the Republic would not lay down its arms till it had driven its enemies over the Rhine.

<sup>3</sup> *Supra*, p. 53. Tuscany had also come to terms with France.

<sup>4</sup> The incorporation of Luxemburg and Belgium with France had been decreed 1 October, 1795.

coming over the character of the French armies. The war had been the one redeeming feature in the history of the past three years as it had been the one, and the too slender, justification for the excesses of the Government in 1792, 1793, and 1794. It had been the sole refuge of genuine patriots from the squalid rascality of politics. There is thus a certain dramatic justice in the deliverance of France by means of the army and the ascendancy of her greatest general; it was appropriate, perhaps inevitable, that the solution of her troubles should lie in her development as a military nation guided by a dictator. Under the Directory we advance a step nearer to this solution. The "nation in arms" which had driven the foreigners out of France was becoming once more a professional army, and the permanent tactical gains which accrued from that exceptional period could be stereotyped and its weaknesses removed. Throughout the revolutionary epoch the drill-book adhered in the main to the old linear tactics and remained sufficiently formal and elaborate;<sup>1</sup> in practice, however, it was found impossible to handle the raw revolutionary levies in the old formal way, with the result that in the revolutionary campaigns column had to be frequently employed in battle as a *pis aller*. Column, however, except as a preparatory expedient—to bring troops into action—is essentially a very costly formation, and it was only as a preparatory formation that it became stereotyped in the French school of tactics. The great advance during the revolutionary period had nothing to do with column; it was the development of the *tirailleur*, the soldier fighting independently and using his own wits. There can be no question that, during the revolutionary wars, and largely by the development of the *tirailleur* system, what had begun as indiscipline and clumsiness in the French troops had ended in elasticity and adaptiveness. So it was that, when the Napoleonic wars began, a French regiment was ready either to manœuvre in column or fight in line in the open or in line covered by skirmishers or *en bande* of skirmishers (the whole regiment becoming *tirailleurs* for the time being), or, in exceptional circumstances, to rush a position in swiftly moving battalion

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, II. 361.

columns (larger columns were seldom used), or to fight in ragged clusters along the edge of a wood—was in fact ready for anything. By the attainment of this superior elasticity the tactical difficulties which had presented themselves to the Frederician generals ceased to exist for the French army; and great manœuvres corresponding to strategic situations and embracing a wide extent of country became possible and safe. A new school of leaders was also appearing; rising by sheer merit, schooled in the hardships which were the inevitable fate of an ill-formed, ill-provided citizen army, sharing the rigours of the campaign with their soldiers; the names of Desaix, Joubert, Augereau, Masséna, and Berthier, as well as those of Jourdan, Pichegru, Hoche, and Moreau were beginning to be heard. The time seemed ripe for the appearance of a dictator.

Meanwhile, however, there was no sign of his appearance. The man who was to play the rôle was occupied after Vendémiaire at the War Office in drawing up plans for the campaign in Italy,<sup>1</sup> where throughout the beginning of the year 1795 the French, at first under Kellermann then under Schérer, were on the defensive in the Alps. Bonaparte advised a junction of the armies of Italy and of the Alps in the valley of the Stura and an advance on Turin, Lombardy, and Mantua.<sup>2</sup> But his advice was not followed. Schérer pressed along the Mediterranean seaboard and the Tanaro valley and won the two days' battle of Loano (23-24 November), but was unequal to the effort of pressing home this success and went into winter quarters at once.<sup>3</sup> On the Rhine, which was re-

<sup>1</sup> There was at one moment an idea of sending Bonaparte to Turkey to organize the artillery of the Sultan (see "Correspondance générale," ed. 1857-70, I. 80).

<sup>2</sup> See Napoleon, "Correspondance," op. cit. I. 71 *sqq.* Instructions to Kellermann explaining need of offensive (July, 1795), inspired by Bonaparte. Instructions from Committee of Public Safety to the general commanding the two armies, suggesting a junction on the Stura by way of the Col d'Argentière and an advance on Turin, Lombardy, Mantua, and the Col di Trente.

<sup>3</sup> It is only necessary to read the instructions from the Committee of Public Safety to the *représentants en mission* and the generals in order to

garded by both sides as the most important theatre of war, Jourdan and Pichegru resumed the offensive against the Austrians under Clerfayt and Würmser; and, but for the treason of Pichegru, success should have attended their arms. Pichegru, however, was plotting for the overthrow of the Directory and signed an armistice with Austria on 31 December, 1795; Jourdan's campaign, which had been signalized by the capture of Luxemburg, was compromised, and the French armies were thrown back across the Rhine; a great opportunity had been lost, but lost only by the treason of the general. Thus at the close of the year the war had come to a somewhat tame conclusion in both theatres.

Equally tame was the conclusion of the long smouldering Spanish war. Ever since war had been declared by Spain after the execution of Louis XVI there had been a see-saw of hostilities at either end of the Pyrenees. In 1793 Spanish armies had feebly invaded France and in the following year Dugommier led an army into Catalonia while another French army crossed the Bidassoa. Dugommier's army stormed Figueras (27 November), where the general himself lost his life, and Catalonia was bit by bit occupied by the French. In the West the war was less successful, but in 1795 Moncey pushed on to Vittoria and Bilbao. Then in July peace put an end to this dreary campaign.

During the winter months the Directory took up Bonaparte's plans of campaign for Italy, and in the spring decided to give him a chance of carrying them out. On 27 March, 1796, he assumed the command of the Army of Italy. In the light of after events this appointment was epoch-making. To contemporaries its importance cannot have seemed great. For one thing, the campaign of Italy was intended to be subordinate to the campaign in Germany. For another, the condition of the Army of Italy appeared to be wretched in the extreme.

understand that they were inspired and even dictated by Bonaparte; it is easy to recognize both his ideas and his methods of expression. See especially "Correspondance," i. 75 *sqq.* (This piece is written in Junot's hand, but with notes in Bonaparte's hand and contains verbatim extracts from the "*Mémoire militaire sur l'armée d'Italie*," piece 50.)

Schérer had been grumbling and procrastinating in his winter quarters, and, when pressed to act, had even proffered his resignation. Without money, stores, or reinforcements it was impossible, he had urged, to prosecute the advance into Piedmont; and so the ill-clad army had shivered in its mountainous winter-quarters and lost more in morale than it could have lost by an unsuccessful campaign. It was to this unpromising heritage that General Bonaparte succeeded in the end of March, 1796. Yet before a month was out he had broken up the coalition by detaching the Sardinians from it, before a second month was out his army was in front of Mantua, the key to the Austrian position in Italy: before a year was out he had dictated terms to the Pope, and in little more than a year (*viz.* 18 April, 1797) he had forced the Austrians to their knees in the preliminaries of Leoben.

This great overturn announces the appearance of a great political and military genius; and Bonaparte's first stroke of genius was to see in the conditions which had baffled his predecessors the material of victory. There were many things that told in his favour: his previous experience of war in the same region (1793-4); his prolonged study of the political and geographical peculiarities of Northern Italy while he was working for the Directory in Paris;<sup>1</sup> his close relations with the Directors, who looked to him as their saviour; his own passionate devotion to glory, which sent him to Italy to con-

<sup>1</sup> The question how far Bonaparte used Maillebois' campaign of 1745 as a model has raised much discussion. The fundamental conceptions of the two campaigns were the same: *viz.* the separation of the allies. There is no question that Bonaparte had studied Maillebois' campaign; no general of intelligence would have failed to do so. He was familiar with the writings of Bourcet, Maillebois' chief-of-staff, who wrote not only a history of the 1745 campaign but a remarkable book on mountain warfare which had helped to shape Bonaparte's military ideas. It was natural that Bonaparte should have beside him the account of a campaign fought on the same ground and against the same enemies, written as it was by a military author whom he highly esteemed. There is no doubt that he had Bourcet's book with him. This is not to say either that he followed Maillebois and Bourcet slavishly in matters of detail, or that he could not have conceived his plan of campaign without their help: but only that he used the most obvious means of arriving at his conclusions,



quer or die ; his personal fascination, his melodramatic instinct, and his power of appealing to the imagination of the soldier, which quickly made him the idol of his troops—all these things, quite apart from his extraordinary intellect, helped to place the ball at his feet. As to his opponents and the conditions of warfare in Italy, his insight told him, first, that there was no unity amongst the allies ; that although Austria and Sardinia were fighting ostensibly in concert each was really fighting for her own hand :<sup>1</sup> secondly, that the peoples of Italy, especially those which groaned under the alien rule of Austria, would be willing enough to be conquered ; and Bonaparte calculated on the attractions to the populace of the revolutionary propaganda.<sup>2</sup> Above all he calculated on being able to make the country provide for his armies ; he knew the Directory well enough to understand that no help could be expected from that peculating government. But instead of repining like Schérer he determined to provide for himself. In his hands the Army of Italy would be self-supporting ; this meant that it would also be swift. This idea of the self-supporting army was no new one. It had been put into practice by Custine on the Rhine in 1792-3, and it had more recently been officially advocated by the Committee of Public Safety in a note of 1795, probably inspired by Bonaparte himself and addressed to the General commanding in Italy. "The first principle," so ran the note, "that must animate us in controlling the armies of the Republic is that they must feed themselves at the expense of the enemy's country."<sup>3</sup> Filibustering on the grand scale was thus not an invention of 1796, only its execution was now committed to a master hand.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Of the two Sardinia, a traditionally military state, was the more immediately dangerous ; and if she could be brought to terms the task of driving Austria from Italy ought to present no overwhelming difficulty.

<sup>2</sup> The Committee of Public Safety had already spent money on the propagation of Jacobin principles in Italy.

<sup>3</sup> Napoleon, "Correspondance," op. cit. i. 75.

<sup>4</sup> The self-supporting idea of course favoured Bonaparte's personal ambitions. He could make himself at once the idol of his army and the prop of the home government. The first pilfering of art treasures began

The fighting strength of the allies which now confronted Bonaparte was about 52,000 (32,000 Austrians and 20,000 Sardinians);<sup>1</sup> they lacked cohesion, however, and were disheartened by a long period of ill-success. Above all they represented, both in their methods of war and their methods of promotion, an effete military system. The allied commanders, Colli (Sardinian) and Beaulieu (Austrian), were not indeed the feeble nonentities they have often been painted; Colli was a good vigorous officer, and Beaulieu, though seventy-one, was brave and resolute. Neither, however, was a genius, and both were typical of the old school of warfare;<sup>2</sup> they were confronted by the men who had won their way upwards in the wars of the Revolution, men who, while familiar with the rules of the old school of warfare, were advancing in the school of experience towards the new methods which were to revolutionize them. Here in Italy in 1796, under the leadership of Bonaparte, those new tactical methods and the military qualities which had grown up in the revolutionary wars were to be brought to the test of battle.

The young general arrived at Nice on 26 March, and found the French force in six divisions cantoned along the Mediterranean littoral, facing north, from Nice to Savona. The enemy occupied the Maritime Alps and Apennines, the Sardinians to the west, the Austrians to the east of the River Bormida. Bonaparte's plan was to separate them by directing his attack at the point where their forces touched; this was at Carcare, where the Savona road forks north-east towards Alessandria (Austrian) and north-west towards Turin (Sardinian). This plan was facilitated by the faulty movements of the Austrians. Already while Schérer was still

very early (April, 1796), when Bonaparte found some valuable statuary at Oneglia and promptly put it up for sale ("Correspondance," *op. cit.* i. 125).

<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte estimated the allies at 74,000 infantry and 13,000 cavalry. The estimate was grossly—no doubt purposely—exaggerated ("Correspondance," *op. cit.* i. 125).

<sup>2</sup> Bonaparte himself spoke very disparagingly of all the Austrian commanders.

in command the French, in order to bring pressure upon Genoa, had moved westwards and Beaulieu assumed that they intended to edge along the coast towards the city of Genoa.<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte's occupation of Voltri encouraged him in this belief. The Austrians immediately moved eastward to protect Genoa, and thus weakened themselves at the point of junction at Carcare. Bonaparte at once sent in Masséna and Augereau to sweep aside the weakened Austrian force at this point, and this they accomplished in the Battle of Montenotte (11 and 12 April).<sup>2</sup> A wedge was thus driven between the allies. Bonaparte could now deal with them in detail, and began to hail blows right and left. Colli was defeated by Augereau at Millesimo on the 13th, the Austrians under Argenteau by Bonaparte himself on the 14th at Dego. Beaulieu fell back down the Bormida on Acqui, and Bonaparte turned on the Sardinians, driving them down the valley of the Tanaro and defeating them at Ceva and Mondovi (17 and 21 April). He then established direct communications with Nice through the Col di Tenda, summoned reinforcements, and compelled the Sardinians to sue for terms. These were granted in the Armistice of Cherasco (28 April), by which Sardinia retired from the war and surrendered to the French the fortresses of Coni, Tortona, Alessandria, and Valenza, which commanded the entrance to Lombardy. The last-named was included by Bonaparte in order to make the Austrians believe that he intended to cross the Po at that, the most obvious, point. But instead of doing so he marched rapidly by the south bank of the river (which is clear of tributaries), and only crossed at Piacenza. By this ruse he turned the Austrian position and Beaulieu hurriedly abandoned Milan and made all speed for the Adda. On 10 May Bonaparte, mainly to crown his successes with a striking feat of arms, stormed the bridge over

<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte at St. Helena maintained that the luring of the Austrians towards Genoa was always part of his plan. The evidence is rather the other way, viz. that it was a lucky chance of which he was quick to take advantage (see Rose, "Napoleon," I. 83).

<sup>2</sup> See Pierron's brochure on the question of how far Bonaparte used Maillebois' campaign.

that river at Lodi, displaying in the action the most desperate personal gallantry. This action, unimportant in itself, marked a turning point in his career; it was the first occasion on which he became aware of the greatness of his powers. He then abandoned the pursuit of the enemy and marched to Milan, which city he entered on 16 May, the Austrians withdrawing to the Mincio. Bonaparte's first step was to establish in Milan the Lombard Republic.

The Directory who had hoped to find in Bonaparte a superlative brigand rather than a superlative general<sup>1</sup> were alarmed at the completeness of his triumph and nettled at the independence he had shown in concluding an armistice with the Sardinians without consulting their commissioner, Saliceti; they therefore sent Kellermann to the front to divide the command with him, but drew back before Bonaparte's proffered resignation. The latter had indeed already begun to put into practice the plan by which he made himself indispensable to the impecunious government. Italy was held to ransom, and the spoils began not only to reward the victorious troops but also to glut the directors and to dazzle the people of France. The consequence was that the treaty with the Sardinians was ratified and the general was able to advance on Mantua, the fortress on the Mincio which, commanding the approaches to the Tyrolese passes, was the key to the Austrian position in the peninsula.<sup>2</sup>

Cleverly threatening Beaulieu's communications by feints on the upper valley of the Adige, in the execution of which he unhesitatingly violated the neutrality of Venice, Bonaparte forced the passage of the Mincio at Borghetto, drove Beaulieu back into the Tyrol, and so isolated Mantua which was held by a garrison of 13,000 men. During the progress of the blockade of this fortress his energy found an outlet in a southerly direction. The Dukes of Parma and Modena were relieved of

<sup>1</sup> "Take everything out of Italy that can be transported and that is of any use to us": such were the instructions which the general received from his Government.

<sup>2</sup> He inflicted fierce reprisals on the city of Pavia where a popular rising had checked his advance.

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several million francs and much property in kind. Bologna was seized and the papacy held to ransom for an immense sum (about £1,500,000) and the cession of Ferrara, Bologna, and Ancona. At the same time a profitable raid into Tuscany was executed; Naples also was forced to make terms with France, while Venice was made to disgorge some of her wealth. But the Emperor had no idea of abandoning Italy without further effort; Würmser, another general of the old school, was dispatched from Vienna in July to the relief of Mantua; in the hope of reaching his goal before Bonaparte had time to gather his scattered forces, Würmser divided his troops (about 47,000 against 42,000 French) and approached by both shores of Lake Garda, he himself moving by the eastern and Quosdanovitch by the western shore of the lake. Bonaparte quickly thrust himself to the crucial strategical point, viz. the southern extremity of the lake. With a correct appreciation of the relative importance of things, and judging that his true object was the destruction of the Austrian armies, he raised the siege of Mantua and destroyed his own siege train. Würmser, who had advanced by the line of the Adige, was thus enabled to enter Mantua. But he quickly found that the possession of the fortress might be purchased too dear. Already Quosdanovitch was at grips with Augereau in the direction of Salò and Lonato (31 July), and unless Würmser could come to his assistance the Austrian forces ran the risk of being destroyed in detail. Würmser, therefore, advanced in a north-easterly direction and seized Castiglione, only to be driven out of it by the skill and energy of Augereau. There followed three days of confused fighting round Lonato (2, 3, 4 August) in which Quosdanovitch was defeated by Masséna and Bonaparte and driven back into the Tyrol. On 5 August Würmser met with a second defeat at Castiglione and was swept back up the valley of the Adige. The net result of the fighting was inconclusive, but the Austrians had been decisively worsted, and, in spite of the fact that Mantua had been revictualled and that the French siege train had been lost, Bonaparte's strategical intuition and the brilliant fighting qualities of his subordinates—of Augereau in particular—had saved a situation which for a time had

seemed extremely perilous, and in face of which he had at one time almost decided to abandon the line of the Mincio.

In the following month Würmsers made a second attempt, was severely defeated at Bassano (8 September), and only with the greatest difficulty succeeded in cutting his way into Mantua where he was a somewhat unwelcome guest. During the pause in hostilities that followed, Bonaparte's political activity found time to operate. Acting on his own initiative, he declared the Duchy of Modena to be under the protection of France. The process of rearranging Italy commenced, and France began to realize that she had thrown up not only a military genius but a bold statesman. Bologna and Ferrara were united to Modena and formed into what was to prove the shortlived Transpadane Republic. For Italy the period of transition had begun that only ended in 1870.

Encouraged by the victories of the Archduke Charles over Moreau and Jourdan, Francis II now (October-November) prepared for a fresh attempt to regain Italy. A new veteran, Alvinczy, was to advance from the direction of Friuli and join forces at Verona with Davidovich who was to descend the valley of the Adige. In this campaign the Austrians had a great numerical superiority and a more capable commander than either Beaulieu or Würmsers;<sup>1</sup> but Bonaparte, in the central position which he occupied, enjoyed as before the possession of the inner lines. In spite of this, however, Augereau and Masséna were defeated by Alvinczy at Caldiero (near Verona) on 11 and 12 November in an attempt to drive him from his position by a frontal attack. This initial disaster Bonaparte was able, however, to repair by an audacious flank movement. The three days' Battle of Arcola was a brilliant victory for the French (15-17 November), in which Bonaparte displayed the greatest personal valour: it effectually prevented the junction of the Austrian forces.

Negotiations which the Directory had opened were promptly stopped; the fate of the Austrians in Italy was sealed. Alvinczy made one more attempt in the early days

<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte used to say that Alvinczy was the best general with whom he was confronted in his Italian campaigns.

of 1797, this time confined to the valley of the Adige. A desperate battle, in which Bonaparte's genius was conspicuously displayed, was fought at Rivoli on the banks of this river; Alvinczy was rolled back into the gorges of the Tyrol (14 January) and on 2 February Mantua surrendered. Having brought the Pope to terms at Tolentino (19 February, 1797), by which treaty the Holy See abandoned its claim to Avignon, ceded the legations (Bologna, Ferrara, and Romagna), together with the port of Ancona, to France, agreed to close its ports to the English, and recognized the Cispadane Republic, besides paying a large fine in cash and works of art, Bonaparte now proceeded to sweep the remnants of the Austrians from Italian soil.

While Bonaparte had been enjoying this hard fought but practically unchecked triumph in Italy, fortune had not smiled on French arms elsewhere. The armies of Jourdan (45,000) and Moreau (70,000) had advanced into Germany with the object of lightening the pressure on the army of Italy and co-operating in a joint march on Vienna. By the end of August Jourdan was at Würzburg, Moreau near Munich. The Archduke Charles, however, was able to deal with them in detail and inflicted on Jourdan the successive defeats of Amberg (24 August), Würzburg (2 September) Aschaffenburg (13 September), and Altenkirchen (19 September), and flung him back over the Rhine (20 September). Moreau, though gravely compromised by these events, successfully extricated his army from the heart of Germany by a retreat which greatly enhanced his reputation, and reached Strassburg in safety.

Meanwhile the rebellion in la Vendée had been quelled by Hoche, who embarked the bulk of the forces thereby released for a descent on Ireland; this, however, was effectually thwarted by bad weather, and Hoche was obliged to return (1 January, 1797) with a loss of five ships and without having landed a man. A treaty of alliance with Spain revived the hope of dealing a blow at England, but it was quickly dashed by the defeat of the Spanish fleet in the Battle of Cape St. Vincent (14 February, 1797).

Bonaparte, who had been considerably reinforced,<sup>1</sup> was by this time in the heart of the Carnic Alps. The Archduke Charles who had succeeded Alvinczy, and who had failed to seize the opportunity offered by Bonaparte's diversion against the Pope, could do nothing to check him, though he made some resistance on the banks of the Rivers Piave (10 March), Tagliamento<sup>2</sup> and Isonzo and at Tarvis (23 March); it was indeed the arts of peace and not those of war that eventually (18 April) stopped the triumphant advance of the French when they were within sixty miles of the Austrian capital. Bonaparte was unaware that the armies of the Rhine were once more about to advance. Hoche was already over the Rhine with the Army of the Sambre and Meuse, and had defeated the Austrians at Neuwied on 18 April. Moreau also had crossed the Rhine at Kehl and was advancing through Germany. Bonaparte knew nothing of this and feared for his own communications. With his strong political instinct he judged that he could snatch favourable terms from the Austrians now that he "had them on the run"; they had suffered very heavy losses in the campaign.

The preliminaries of Leoben were signed on 18 April, 1797. Austria agreed to surrender the Netherlands to France and France to accept her constitutional,<sup>3</sup> as opposed to her natural, limits on the Rhine. Austria was to receive an adequate *quid pro quo*, and a congress was to be summoned to decide the final terms on the basis of the maintenance of the Empire. By a secret clause it was further agreed that Austria should confirm the establishment of the Lombard Republic and agree to the annexation to that state of the Duchy of Modena and in return receive the terra firma of Venice, as far as the Oglio and the Po, together with Istria and Dalmatia. Compensation for Venice was to be found in the three papal legations ceded at Tolentino.

<sup>1</sup> On 6 March Bernadotte arrived with 19,000 men from the Army of the Rhine, which brought Bonaparte's army up to 74,000 men.

<sup>2</sup> The action of the Tagliamento is interesting tactically as the first occasion on which Bonaparte ordered the mixed formation of line and column which he afterwards used with such success.

<sup>3</sup> Viz. as laid down by Constitution of 1795.



Risings in Venice against the French, probably provoked by French agents, gave the necessary pretext for interference in that quarter. At the same time Genoa was formed into the Ligurian Republic under French protection (June, 1797), while Lombardy was similarly transformed into a Cisalpine Republic to which was ultimately added what was left of the recently formed Transpadane, together with certain portions of Venetian territory and the Valtelline. These arrangements were slowly taking shape during the months that intervened between Leoben and the definitive Treaty of Campo Formio (17 October).

Meanwhile in Paris the Directory had been dragging out a precarious existence. The great question around which the party battle raged were those of the war, finance, religion, and the *émigrés*. Finance indeed was not so much a question as an ever increasing menace; the depreciation in the *assignats* was getting worse and worse; the annual deficit was recurrent; bribery and corruption ran riot; bankruptcy stared the nation in the face. For the religious difficulties, which arose out of the violent laws against the recusant clergy, the Directors offered no solution. They announced the advent of toleration and admitted the practice of all religions, but they took no steps to repeal the legislation which placed the tolerated orthodox priests under the ban of the law. The "Constitutionalists" fought hard for the repeal of this tolerant legislation, but were unable to carry it. The Constitutional Church, which had never been a very strong or popular body, was gradually dwindling, and was not ardently supported by the Directory, whose only care was for the celebration of the patriotic fêtes and the observance of the *décadis*. Larévellière de Lépeaux enjoys the distinction of having invented a new religion of his own; but "Theophilanthropy" ("a kind of hotch-potch of Rousseau, Voltaire, Socrates, Seneca, and Fénelon") soon outlived an ephemeral popularity. Thus it may be said that the State was non-Christian, coldly tolerant of the so-called National (i.e. Constitutional) Church, and ostensibly tolerant of, but in reality prejudiced against, the Catholic faith.

The question of the *émigrés* was even more thorny than that of religion, and the Directory was even less successful in solving it. The Terror had created an immense class of proscribed persons, many of whom were not *émigrés* at all but simply victims of the spite of the men in power, and many of whom suffered for the sins of others; for by a law of 25 October, 1795, the relations of *émigrés* had been deprived of civil rights. At least 100,000 to 150,000 persons were suffering from this vindictive legislation. This question—as that of the Church—was greatly complicated by the fact that the confiscated estates of the *émigrés* and clergy had been sold for the benefit of the State and remained the chief security for the vast quantities of *assignats* that had been put into circulation. Remedial legislation, therefore, involved a financial crisis of the first magnitude. The “Constitutionalist” party cried out for the repeal of the act of 25 October, but even that they were unable to secure. The question of the *émigrés* was to be the skeleton in the cupboard for every Government for many a long year to come. Under the Directory the only way by which a man could get his name erased from the list was by bribery of the directors.

Such were the matters with which the sordid Government and supposititious chambers had been chiefly occupied while Bonaparte was making his name in Italy. The year 1796 had been disturbed by a dangerous socialist conspiracy (that of Babeuf), which aimed at the destruction of the existing Government and its replacement by a socialistic regime. The leaders of the conspiracy were arrested and sentenced to death or transportation. January, 1797, saw a Royalist conspiracy, of which the ringleader was the Abbé Brottier; it, too, was nipped in the bud; for the Directors were becoming past masters in the art of self-preservation if in nothing else. Their ingenuity in this direction was now to be put to a severe test. In March and April, 1797, the time arrived for the first renewal of the *Corps Législatif*. Two hundred and sixteen ex-Conventionals resigned their seats, and the new members put the “Constitutional” party in an actual majority. On 27 May Barthélemy, the hero of the Peace of Basle and a

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supporter of Carnot, replaced Letourneur on the Directory. The policy of the Constitutionals was to end the war on the basis of the Constitutional frontiers, accord toleration to the persecuted clergy and relations of *émigrés*, and put the Constitution into force. The "Revolutionists" on the other hand (i.e. the bulk of the usurping "two-thirds"), most of the Ministers, and the Directors, Rewbell, Larévellière, and Barras, desired the continuance of the war, the assertion of the claim to natural frontiers, and the maintenance of the legislation against *émigrés* and clergy—both in their own interests. Self-preservation in fact was still pitted against political freedom. The Constitutionals used their majority to secure immunity from arrest for working priests. The Revolutionists saw that the time had come to use force; for if things were allowed to take their legal course their extinction was only a matter of time. Barras bethought himself of Hoche, who was at the head of 12,000 men destined for a fresh attempt on England, and ordered him to march towards Paris. Carnot's firmness and Barras' untrustworthiness saved the day. Hoche was summoned before the Directory and reprimanded by Carnot without any attempt by Barras to support him. He returned in mortification to his army and died shortly afterwards (19 September). With him disappeared the only man who might have barred the way to Bonaparte.

Hoche having failed, could any help be derived from the conqueror of Italy who had by this time once more left France? Would he be willing to extricate the three directors (including his old patron Barras) and the "Revolutionists" from their dilemma? Bonaparte's political intuition told him that the time for a final *coup d'état* had not yet arrived; "the pear was not ripe" as he put it himself; but when he was attacked by the Constitutionals for his high-handed conduct in Italy, he felt that he must do something. He selected Augereau for the work in the capital—a fire-eater who would terrify the politicians, and at the same time a fool who would never be able to turn things to his own advantage. On 3 September the three Directors struck at the two. A Royalist plot was the pretext; Barthélemy was arrested, Carnot slipped away.

On 18 Fructidor (4 September) Augereau led 2000 men against the *Corps Législatif* and arrested a number of the Constitutionalist deputies, some of whom had been dallying with Royalism while others had not. Once more the Directory had saved its neck, this time by the help of Bonaparte, acting through Augereau.

On the following day the *coup d'état* bore fruit. Fifty-three "conspirators" were sentenced to deportation, forty-nine departments were disfranchised, the Directors being entrusted with the nomination of deputies. The law of 25 October was re-enacted and sharpened, the restrictions on religion reimposed and strengthened. Merlin of Douai and François of Neufchâteau took their seats in the Directory. The success of the *coup d'état* was complete. The new era began. It was one of persecution, bloodshed, and bankruptcy. *Émigrés* and priests were shot or transported in large numbers; the wretched victims were hurried off to a miserable exile at Cayenne (the "dry guillotine" as it was grimly called), and on 30 September, 1797, the State went bankrupt; two-thirds of the public debt was written off. The *coup d'état* of Fructidor marks an undoubted change in the position of Bonaparte. Hitherto the Government had never given official consent to the plenary powers he had assumed. It had protested, attempted to override, threatened, and in the end sullenly acquiesced. Bonaparte from being their slave had in fact become their bully; but after Fructidor he stood forward as their protector, and the transition from protector to master from master to supplanter would not be difficult. Already the most acute mind in Paris recognized the truth; the alliance between Talleyrand and Bonaparte had begun.

While the luckless victims of Fructidor were jolting across France in iron cages on their way to a tropical prison, Bonaparte was concluding the definitive treaty with Austria. He was on much firmer ground in the autumn than he had been in the spring, and pressure was being put on him by the Directory to demand the recognition of the Rhine frontier. The interviews between the general and the Austrian pleni-

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potentiary were prolonged and often stormy, but in the end Bonaparte secured terms considerably more advantageous to France than those of Leoben. Austria received Venice only as far as the Adige, but with the city itself and the islands as well as Istria and Dalmatia. The remainder of the Venetian territory was handed to the Cisalpine Republic which also absorbed Modena, Mantua, Massa, Carrara, Bologna, Ferrara, and the Romagna. The Duke of Modena received compensation in the Breisgau; an imperial congress was to be summoned to Rastadt to settle the imperial questions involved. At the last moment Bonaparte stood out for and acquired the Ionian Islands; they were an important item in the eastern schemes which he was already revolving in his brain. Secretly it was agreed that Austria would use her good offices at the Congress to obtain the Rhine frontier for France from Basle to the River Nette (just below the Moselle), on condition of receiving Salzburg and the "Quarter of the Inn". The Treaty of Campo Formio (17 October, 1797) was a brilliant success for France. Its peculiar cleverness lay in the fact that it was not only favourable to France but acceptable to Austria. The sufferers were Venice and the Empire neither of which had strength to resist.<sup>1</sup> This settlement concluded, France stood at peace with all Europe, England alone excepted. This was the grand opportunity for securing a fruitful and honourable peace with that country. England was eager for it and in July Lord Malmesbury was sent to negotiate. The terms were easy, even magnanimous, and Carnot had urged their acceptance. But war was essential to a Government which, although willing to use military force for its own protection, could not regard with equanimity the prospect of the return to France of a quarter of a million troops, clamouring for arrears of pay, and with their full complement of ambitious generals (including Bonaparte). Peace, for which France longed, was what its Government most dreaded. So Lord Malmesbury's offers were

<sup>1</sup> The *coup d'état* was not without effect on the negotiations with Austria. The demands of the French Government became much higher after Fructidor.

refused; after the *coup d'état* he received orders to quit France immediately. War was in fact profitable to the directors, war was necessary, and war they would have.

Such a war was easily provoked. The settlement of Campo Formio had left Europe in a thoroughly disturbed condition, and the Congress of Rastadt was dragging along inconclusively. The changes in Italy and Germany were so vast, both in what they actually did and in what they heralded, that they could never be accepted without a more serious convulsion than the struggle of 1796-7. So when the Directory in the spring of 1798 forced a quarrel on the Papacy, lent its countenance to a revolutionary party in Rome, drove the Pope from the Vatican, and helped to set up a Roman Republic (15 February, 1798),<sup>1</sup> and when in the following month they brought force to bear on the Cisalpine Republic, to make it bind itself commercially and politically to France, when in March Holland was skilfully "fructidorized" by Joubert, a constitution on French lines being imposed and the Dutch chambers purged of "reactionaries"; and when finally French troops under Brune entered Switzerland and, on the pretext of assisting an almost non-existent democratic party, entered Berne (4 March) and set up an Helvetic Republic (22 March), Europe braced herself for another effort; Austria, Russia, and England began to draw together and the strands of the "Second Coalition" began to be plaited.

Already the Directors had devised and were preparing a blow, which they hoped would be deadly, at the commercial supremacy of England. So early as 4 January, 1798, they had conceived the idea of a descent on England and an "Army of England" had been got together. Bonaparte, however, had quickly decided<sup>2</sup> that under existing conditions the descent was impossible, and the Government had been

<sup>1</sup> Berthier entered Rome on 15 February, and was replaced on 21 February by Masséna, who was almost immediately succeeded by Gouvion-Saint-Cyr.

<sup>2</sup> Bonaparte inspected the northern coasts in February, 1798, and reported unfavourably. See "Correspondance," op. cit. III: 486 sqq.

driven back on the expedient of injuring England indirectly by attacking her commerce, while maintaining a camp on the Channel coast to keep up the alarm of invasion. Thus we have already the germ of the Continental Blockade and of the Boulogne Camp which formed such an important part of Bonaparte's subsequent policy : to some extent, at any rate, the future Emperor was a true son of the Directory. The idea of injuring invulnerable England by interrupting the relations with her Indian possessions was not a new one. The ostensible cause of the breakdown of Lord Malmesbury's negotiations in the previous year had been the question of the Cape of Good Hope. Now the Directory aimed at Egypt, and in the spring of 1798 an expedition was prepared. The truth was that they not only wanted to injure England but to get rid of the ambitious Corsican who had returned with the laurels of Campo Formio and Rastadt to Paris. And Bonaparte was afire for the East. He was not yet at home in politics, and he was drawn to the East by the irresistible desire to *tailler en grand*, to emulate Alexander. Perhaps, too, with that curious political cunning which was rising in him, he recognized that his absence would tell in his favour, that the Directors only wanted rope to hang themselves, that familiarity breeds contempt, that to disappear into the mysterious East would make it easier to reappear with dramatic effect at the profitable moment. The expedition, which sailed on 19 May, 1798, consisted of thirteen ships of the line, fourteen frigates, many smaller craft and some 300 transports, with more than 35,000 troops ; including crews and non-combatants perhaps nearly 50,000 men. The fleet, however, was largely manned by aliens and ill-equipped.

To expose such a force to the risk of contact with the superior naval force of England was reckless in the extreme ; it is the first evidence we have of Bonaparte's inability to grasp the conditions of naval warfare. England it is true had been obliged in 1796 to evacuate the Mediterranean ; but she was now able to reoccupy it, and when she got wind of the Egyptian expedition Nelson was at once instructed to proceed to the Mediterranean, where he took command of

a fleet which comprised thirteen seventy-fours. Bonaparte, who had delayed his voyage in order to seize Malta from the Knights of St. John, was in grave danger and the French fleet would almost certainly have been caught and destroyed had Nelson been properly equipped with cruisers. As it was Bonaparte effected a landing in Egypt on 2 July and easily captured Alexandria, after which he advanced rapidly through the desert on Cairo, and in front of that city fought the Battle of the Pyramids (21 July), when the Moslem horsemen failed to make any impression on the French squares. Cairo was occupied and Bonaparte pushed eastward, sending Desaix southward in pursuit of the enemy. While Bonaparte was enjoying these successes a terrible disaster sundered his communications with France. Whether by the General's command or by the decision of Admiral Brueys<sup>1</sup> the French fleet instead of retiring to Corfu had remained at anchor in Aboukir Bay, and on 1 August the English fleet under Nelson, who had for nearly a month been feverishly scouring the Mediterranean, attacked it as it lay at anchor. The defective equipment of the French fleet condemned it to defeat, Nelson's tactical skill, then proved for the first time on the grand scale, doomed it to annihilation; only two ships of the line escaped. The "Battle of the Nile" set the tone of the entire naval war and the effect on the morale of the French endured until the great duel was over. From the date of this decisive action the Egyptian expedition was doomed to failure. So far as the war with England was concerned it simply meant that Bonaparte, with the best of the French generals and the flower of the army, had ceased for the time being to exist as a force to be reckoned with in Europe.

We must turn from this catastrophe to follow the Rake's Progress of the "fructidorized" Directory. The wanton acts of provocation committed in Italy, Holland, and Switzerland have already been noted; to these had now to be added the

<sup>1</sup> Bonaparte maintained that this was contrary to his instructions and that he had ordered the fleet to proceed to Corfu. Fournier ("Napoleon I," transl. Adams 1912, I. 157) convicts him of having suggested Aboukir as a possible anchorage.



seizure of Malta, which was specially galling to the Czar who regarded himself as the protector of the Knights of Saint John. Moreover, the presence of the French in Rome was a threat to the neighbouring kingdom of Naples, and when Pitt decided to send Nelson to the Mediterranean it was as much for the protection of Naples as for the destruction of the French fleet. This active step by England encouraged Russia and Austria to unite for resistance to French aggression. Rushing towards war as it was, it was necessary for the Directory to make proper provision for recruits. On 5 September, therefore, was passed the famous law of conscription, which rendered all unmarried men between twenty and twenty-five liable for military service. It did not help the Directory much; for martial adour was moribund in France:<sup>1</sup> but it was the basis of Bonaparte's recruiting system during all his campaigns.

The formation of the second coalition was accompanied by innumerable difficulties and infinite delays and it was not till 29 December, 1798, that a definite alliance between Russia and Great Britain was completed. While the great powers were lumbering reluctantly into line the petty state of Naples engaged the enemy with ill-considered haste. Nelson proceeded to Naples (22 September) after his victory of the Nile, and took up the cause of the Neapolitan Bourbons; on 22 November he sailed with 5000 Neapolitan troops to raise Tuscany, while the main Neapolitan army, led by the Austrian General, Mack, marched on Rome. King Ferdinand entered the capital on 29 November. His triumph, however, was short-lived; the army was scattered by the French General, Championnet, in the first respectable engagement (4 December), the French recovered Rome (9 December), and the royal mischief-makers fled to Sicily (21 December). Their flight was the signal for a popular rising and within three months the Neapolitan kingdom had become the Parthenopean Republic under French control (23 January, 1799). These events decided the Directory and they proceeded to a general forward movement in Italy. Taking advantage of a

<sup>1</sup> Of 200,000 now called up scarcely a quarter answered.

cleverly engineered agitation in Piedmont they occupied Turin (December, 1798). King Charles Emmanuel emulated his Neapolitan neighbours by retiring to Sardinia (till 1814), while his valuables found a home in the French Treasury.

It was amid these outrages that the Russo-British Alliance—the basis of the Second Coalition—was concluded; Portugal was already at war with France, Austria joined two months later, and her determination coincided with the murder of the French envoys at Rastadt (28 April).<sup>1</sup> Turkey had long since bound herself to Russia and was thus a member of the coalition; but Prussia maintained an obstinate and inglorious neutrality. France was thus confronted by the united forces of Austria, Russia, England, Portugal, Naples, Sardinia, and Turkey.

The allies determined on a triple attack, by the plain of Lombardy, by the Danube and Rhine, and by a landing in Holland. The Austrians and Russians swept the French (under Schérer and afterwards under Moreau) up the Po Valley and across the Maritime Alps, thus reversing the conditions of 1796-7. The army of Naples under Macdonald was defeated by Suvarov in the three days' engagement of the Trebbia (17-19 June), and driven back on Genoa. Italy was lost to France, and the unstable constellation of republics set below the horizon as quickly as it had risen. In August Joubert took command of the Army of Italy. He was the young general to whom the Directory (now under the influence of the astute Sieyès) looked to extricate them from their difficulties. Joubert advanced with reckless swiftness into Piedmont only to be promptly surrounded by Suvarov at Novi (15 August). The General was killed at the outset of the action and his army was defeated with a loss of 12,000 men. Thus ingloriously ended for the time being the French domination of Italy.

<sup>1</sup> The French envoys, who had undoubtedly had a hand in fomenting disturbances in Southern Germany, had remained at Rastadt after the German envoys had departed. The Austrian authorities gave orders that their papers should be seized. This was done and they were ordered to leave the town at once. Their carriage was stopped by hussars (or possibly by French *émigrés* disguised as hussars). Two were murdered (see Fournier, *op. cit.* i. 148 and note).

Meanwhile in Central Europe the Archduke Charles had defeated Jourdan at Osterach and Stockach (March, 1799) and established himself on the Rhine; but here his offensive ended, and after Novi it was determined to bring Suvarov across the Alps to co-operate with the Russian force (under Korsakov) already in Switzerland and with the Archduke Charles. It was at this important juncture that the Austrians began to display the jealousy of Russia which was destined to ruin a campaign begun with such fair promise. The Archduke was withdrawn and Masséna was able to strike at Korsakov and win a great victory at Zurich (25-26 September), while Suvarov was still struggling through the Saint Gothard. Suvarov's campaign was ruined and it was with the utmost difficulty, and only by the force of his indomitable character, that the gallant old savage extricated himself from the mountains and got through to Lindau.

The third of the enterprises of the allies was at the same time tumbling to pieces in the north. Twelve thousand British troops had landed in Holland in August and were joined by 17,000 Russians in September. An attack on the French at Bergen was undertaken. But it was repulsed by Brune, with the result that on 18 October the Duke of York, who was in command of the British force, signed the Convention of Alkmaar, by which he agreed to evacuate Holland. Thus, thanks mainly to the stupid jealousies of the allies, France in the close of the autumn of 1799 had succeeded in stemming a tide which had for a moment seemed overwhelming.

But the military collapse of the summer had roused public opinion against the Directory; the approach of Suvarov and the barbarous Cossacks had made France tremble. People were learning Russian at Marseilles! The elections of the year VIII had strengthened the opposition; and it had been necessary to resort to a minor gerrymandering *coup d'état* on 11 May (22 Floreal), sixty of the elected deputies being passed over in favour of supporters of the Government. More important still had been the entry into the Directory of Sieyès. The previous history of the Abbé Sieyès was peculiar. His enigmatic character, coherent thought, and epigrammatic language had given

him an ascendancy in the early days of the Revolution; and even during the Terror he was credited with having "been in the wings while Robespierre was on the stage". He was a clear if somewhat pedantic political thinker, inclining to liberalism and democratic constitutional monarchy, and he entered the Directory (replacing Rewbell) on 16 May, 1799, with the deliberate intention of ending it and replacing it by some form of limited monarchy.<sup>1</sup> Clearly this could only be done by a *coup d'état*, for by the Constitution of An III constitutional change was precluded for a period of nine years. Sieyès found himself isolated from his co-directors; nor were his hands greatly strengthened by the purging of the Directory on thirtieth Prairial, when, by vote of the Councils, Treilhard, Larévellière de Lépeaux, and Merlin were ejected and replaced by Gohier, Moulins, and Roger Ducos. The military collapse had in fact revived Jacobinism as nothing else could, and the fear of Suvarov was for a time put in the shade by the fear of a recrudescence of the Terror.

The Law of Hostages (12 July), a vile act of tyranny, which authorized the imprisonment of the relations of *émigrés* and Royalists as a guarantee against disturbance in disaffected districts, was a distinct reminiscence of 1793. And a progressive income tax of 100,000,000 francs (22 August) was a renewed menace to property.<sup>2</sup> The spectres of the Convention, the Terror, and the Mountain were abroad in the land. The revival of the Jacobins' Club and its establishment in the *manège* set the seal to the alarm of the country. To meet this revival Sieyès had his plan. He could do nothing without the assistance of a man of the sword; "force," he said, "must be called to the assistance of wisdom". His choice had fallen upon Joubert, who had been sent to Italy in the hope that he would turn the tide there and in so doing catch the public eye. It was intended that he should return, crush the Jacobins, dis-

<sup>1</sup> At one time he thought of marrying Madame Royale to the Archduke Charles; at another of Brunswick, at another of Prince Louis Ferdinand of Prussia.

<sup>2</sup> Most of the tax was raised from the quiet well-to-do. The large fortunes escaped, and trade was incidentally ruined.

solve the *Cinq Cents*, and clear the ground for the revision of the Constitution. Then Sieyès' opportunity would come.

The period when France was waiting for Joubert's stroke was one of great suspense. The condition of the country was miserable in the extreme. Agitation, rebellion, brigandage, and assassination were rife, and the Government was utterly feeble and divided against itself; the only able man in it, indeed, was engaged in compassing its overthrow. Then followed the death of Joubert and the defeat of his army at Novi. Sieyès' plan had broken down. He thought of Moreau, Macdonald, Beurnonville; but men, remembering the campaign of 1796-7, were by this time murmuring the name of Bonaparte. The crisis admitted of no other solution; and on 18 September the Directory sent a pressing message to recall him from Egypt.

No sooner had they done so than the tide, which he was intended to turn, turned of its own accord. Bergen was followed by Zurich, and Zurich by the news of Bonaparte's victory over the Turks at Aboukir. This only whetted the national appetite for victories; both to quicken the pace at the front and to put strength into the Government at home, a *coup d'état* was almost as necessary as ever. For the moment it was really a choice between a relapse to Jacobin government or an advance, by way of a *coup d'état*, towards a strong moderate government. General Jourdan plotted with Bernadotte, the War Minister, for the overthrow of Barras and Sieyès and the establishment of a Jacobin government. On 14 September (22 Prairial) Jourdan demanded a decree of *patrie en danger*, which would have been fatal to the directors. Largely by the resource of Lucien Bonaparte, Napoleon's brother, this danger was averted. Bernadotte was jockeyed out of the War Office and Jourdan's motion rejected. These feverish upheavals only demonstrated afresh the need of a more stable government, so that when Bonaparte landed at Fréjus, on 9 October, he was greeted, not perhaps as he would have been greeted in August or September, but with universal acclamation.

The course of events in Egypt which, so far as France was

concerned, had been wrapped in obscurity since the Battle of the Nile, must now be briefly traced. Undismayed by the severing of his communications, which he must always have regarded as a probable eventuality, Bonaparte had set to work to make his army self-supporting, while at the same time he applied his versatile intellect to the political, religious, economic, geographical, and scientific problems of the country. He made strong overtures to the Mohammedans and was probably at one time considering whether he should adopt their religion.<sup>1</sup> He had done his best to avoid direct hostilities with Turkey by pretending that the attack on Egypt was not in reality an attack on the Turkish power there, but on the Mamelukes, the Turkish military *caste* which had for long ruled practically unchallenged in that country. When, however, he heard that Turkey had declared war on France he determined not to wait for attack but to take the offensive in Syria.

With about 13,000 troops he advanced into that country, fought the doubtful Battle of El Arish (8 February, 1799) and, taking Jaffa by storm (6 March) was forced by the exigencies of the military situation to put his prisoners to death in cold blood. He then advanced against Acre. Here he came once more into contact with the evil genius that dogged his footsteps throughout his career, embodied in the British Navy. Admiral Sir Sidney Smith and the French engineer Phélippeaux,<sup>2</sup> defended this by no means strongly fortified town against all the attacks of the French, who were hampered by the want of siege artillery. They cut to pieces the Mamelukes and Turks in the Battle of Mount Tabor (16 April) but were unable to take Acre, and it was only on 20 May, and when his army was falling a prey to the plague, that Bonaparte abandoned

<sup>1</sup> See Nielsen, "The Papacy in the Nineteenth Century," i. 224 *sqq.* If Paris was worth a mass to Henry IV the dominion of the East was surely worth a turban and a pair of slippers. Bonaparte seems to have highly esteemed Mohammedanism on account of the rapidity with which it established itself as a religion.

<sup>2</sup> Phélippeaux had been a school-fellow of Bonaparte, but had taken service with the British. Bonaparte declared at St. Helena that if he had had adequate artillery he would have taken Acre (Gourgaud, "Saint Hélène," *op. cit.* i. 274).

the attempt. On 4 June the army re-entered Cairo. It was high time that Bonaparte should concentrate his attention once more on Egypt, for the Turks were now seriously threatening his conquest, and had entrenched themselves at Aboukir. On 25 July the French attacked them in their entrenchments and practically exterminated the entire army (some 10,000 men).

The news Bonaparte was receiving from France now decided him to return home. Considering the distracted state of the country and the alarming condition of affairs in Italy, he was entirely justified in his action; and although he has been reproached (both then and afterwards) for deserting his command and abandoning his army, it was a case of necessity rising superior to laws; history has repeatedly shown that there are occasions when armies must be sacrificed for the preservation of the State. Although he may have half-foreseen these results when he started for Egypt, it must not be forgotten that he went out with the full approval of his Government, to carry out a deliberate policy in the East. His plans were completely upset by the destruction of the fleet and the breaking of his communications, and it is impossible to maintain that he should have held himself imprisoned in Egypt until those communications were restored—which might have been never. His services were once more needed in Europe and he would have been wrong to withhold them from any sentimental feeling of attachment to his army.

After Bonaparte's departure Kléber took over the Egyptian command. His situation was desperate, cut off from reinforcements, dependent on the resources of a bankrupt country, and surrounded by implacable foes. He soon began to treat with the Turks (under the permission of Sir Sidney Smith); but, when the British government repudiated Smith's action, the French turned on the Turks and defeated them at Helio-polis (20 March, 1800). Kléber was assassinated on 14 June, and Menou took over his command.<sup>1</sup> He hung on in an in-

<sup>1</sup> In order to further the interests of France in the East, Menou actually became a Mohammedan, took the name of Abdullah, and married an Egyptian wife.

creasingly difficult position till the following year when Sir Ralph Abercrombie, at the head of a British expedition, defeated the French outside Alexandria. Cairo surrendered, and on 30 August, 1801, Menou capitulated.<sup>1</sup> Thus ended the Egyptian expedition in complete failure, the responsibility for which Bonaparte, with his usual good fortune, was able to shift on to other shoulders, while taking all the glory and profit to himself. The whole interlude is a very interesting one; there can be no doubt that an attraction to the East was a constant element in Bonaparte's complex nature. He can hardly have believed, at any rate after the Battle of the Nile, in the possibility of an immediate advance on either India or Constantinople; but such an ultimate advance was, and remained, in his mind. He desired to establish France in Egypt in order to secure a stepping-stone for future operations in that direction. The expedition therefore was no aimless act of bravado, but had a definite and a quite legitimate, if grandiose, aim; it was part of a gigantic scheme for the humiliation of England, and its failure was a real blow to the cause which France had most at heart.

To return to events in France which we left at the moment when Bonaparte was landing at Fréjus (9 October). In the light of after events it is tempting to conclude that this opportune re-entry of the principal character had been carefully pre-arranged, and that Bonaparte returned to France with the deliberate intention of seizing the reins of government. It is so far true that he was endowed with a peculiar political intuition which enabled him to gauge opportunities, as well as with a profound consciousness of his own intellectual power which prompted him to seize them. We may be quite sure therefore that it was no accident that brought him to Fréjus, but carefully premeditated design. It would be rash, however, to push conclusions farther. It is not probable that he foresaw the course that events actually took; fresh from Egypt, he must even have been to a great extent ignorant of

<sup>1</sup> The news of Menou's defeat did not reach Europe in time to affect the terms of the Peace of Amiens by which Egypt was restored to Turkey.



the precise political conditions of France. Knowing himself an expert angler he had come to throw a fly over troubled waters. He knew that a *coup d'état* was impending, and he credited himself with the ability to wring some profit from it. This does not imply that he was a pure opportunist out on the path of self-aggrandizement. On the contrary, he was quite sincere in his desire to lead France to better things and justly confident in his ability to do so ; to restore the country to her true position in Europe, to pacify faction, and to revive internal order and security by means of a firm and stable government. These were not mean or personal motives, and we may safely believe that they were the motives uppermost in Bonaparte's mind.

We may now attempt to follow the thread of the political tangle which it was his mission to unravel. He found on the one hand a government bound by irresistible forces to an unpopular policy, a scandal in the eyes of Europe, distasteful to the nation, distasteful even to itself, and, since the introduction of Sieyès, containing a powerful element within it working for its overthrow ; on the other hand, a country weary of the Directory, and sick of the interminable vicious circle of *coups d'état*, each of which left things little better than before, each of which led only to a continuance of the old scandals, oppressions, and failures by new hands, none of which brought nearer the close of the Revolution, the end of the war, and the restoration of order and confidence.

Everything, therefore, pointed to a fresh *coup d'état* ; and every one desired that, when it came, it should be decisive and final. For its successful execution a man of action was needed, and by a process of elimination, as well as by his opportune re-appearance, that rôle fell without question to Bonaparte. Sieyès, indeed, viewed with a misgiving which was justified by subsequent events the prospect of placing himself in the hands of a man so resolute and ambitious and at the same time so incalculable ; Bonaparte was forced on him by the verdict of public opinion. The *ex-abbé* was learning to ride in the hope of cutting a respectable figure beside the man of action in the approaching crisis ; but as to who that man of action

should be, there was no doubt directly the news of Bonaparte's landing came to hand. Bonaparte's opportunity had therefore come ; and the fact that the whole future was vague and plastic, that even Sieyès had not decided on the final form of the *coup d'état* or on that of the government that was to replace the Directory, told enormously in favour of a man of his decision, readiness, and strong political instincts. Under these conditions it became possible for him to guide events in a direction favourable to himself.

His first acts showed him a man of judgment. He made for Paris like an arrow, reaching it on 16 October. Once there he veiled himself in a tantalizing privacy, and eagerly took in the political situation. His first instinct was to identify himself with Barras, his old associate of Vendémiaire ; but his knowledge of men told him that Barras was a selfish bravo, and in spite of his Jacobin antecedents and his antipathy to Sieyès he dropped, after consideration, on the Sieyès side of the fence, and determined to act with him in the crisis. Elaborate plans for the *coup d'état* were now prepared ; the first necessity was to remove the *Corps Législatif* from the influence of Paris where the Jacobins had a noisy and dangerous backing. Fortunately the *Anciens* had, by the Constitution,<sup>1</sup> the right to change the place of meeting of the *Corps Législatif*, and the *Anciens* were dominated by Sieyès. Pleading the existence of a (wholly imaginary) Jacobin conspiracy, they dissolved the sittings at Paris, summoned the *Corps Législatif* to St. Cloud for the following day, and appointed Bonaparte to carry out their decree, giving him command of all the troops. Bonaparte proceeded to the Tuileries, the meeting-place of the *Anciens*, and made an indefinite harangue in which he carefully avoided all allusion to the Constitution ; then in the presence of the troops he uttered a florid denunciation of the Directory : " What have you done with the France that I left you so brilliant ? I left you peace, I find war ! I left you victories, I find reverses ! I left you the millions of Italy ; I find everywhere spoliation and misery ! What have you done with a hundred thousand Frenchmen

<sup>1</sup> Art. 102 of Constitution de l'An III.

whom I knew, my companions of glory? They are dead. . . . With a good administration all individuals will forget the factions of which they have been forced to become members ('dont on les fit membres') and will be able to become Frenchmen." While this appeal to the gallery was being made, the *Cinq Cents* met in the Palais Bourbon under the presidency of Lucien Bonaparte, were informed of the decree for the removal of the sitting to St. Cloud, and immediately dissolved. The first act of the *coup d'état* was over; it had been perfectly successful.

Meanwhile Barras, who had been gulled into believing that he was privy to the *coup d'état*, was persuaded by Talleyrand to resign and, having feathered his own nest as well as he could, effected his escape from Paris and so disappears from history—one of the most despicable characters of a period which abounded in such. Gohier and Moulins were now powerless, as the Constitution required the acquiescence of at least three Directors to all executive acts. They had been carefully deceived as to the nature of the crisis and were now placed under supervision in the Luxembourg Palace; thus of the five Directors only two remained at large, Sieyès and Ducos, both of them pledged to the *coup d'état*. On the following day the curtain rose on the second act, the scene being transferred to St. Cloud, where the *Anciens* met in a gallery on the first floor of the castle, while the *Cinq Cents* assembled in the Orangerie. At St. Cloud the real struggle was fought out; it was by no means a one-sided affair, and there were moments when the *coup d'état* was perilously near failure. Even from the *Anciens* Bonaparte, who now plainly appeared as the military agent of the advocates of the *coup d'état*, got a very mixed reception, and could only reply by blurting out ill-advised threats; and when he forced his way, surrounded by his staff, into the *Cinq Cents*, he was mobbed and hustled, and in the end only extricated from a position which was humiliating rather than dangerous, by the intervention of soldiers. It was at this moment, when all seemed to be lost and the cries of *hors la loi*, which had been fatal to Robespierre, were being directed at Bonaparte, that his brother Lucien Bonaparte, the

President of the *Cinq Cents*, took charge of the *coup d'état*. Extricated from the howling Assembly by a patrol of grenadiers, he appeared in his presidential robes at his brother's side before the troops; here he had the inspired effrontery to say that the Assembly was paralysed by a small Jacobin minority armed with daggers and probably in the pay of England, and to accuse that minority of having attempted his brother's life; as a matter of fact the "poignards of Brumaire" were figments of Lucien's brilliant imagination; Napoleon had never been so threatened, but a fortunate scratch received during the scuffle had covered his face with blood. Then, with an admirable sense of the melodramatic, Lucien borrowed a sword and held it at his brother's breast swearing to kill him if he did violence to liberty. He then called on the troops, in his capacity of president of the Assembly, to clear the Orangerie, and save the *Cinq Cents* "from the tyranny of the armed conspirators". On the ears of the terrified and disordered *Cinq Cents* fell the roll of drums, the tramp of armed men; for a moment they stood aghast, then when the bayonets appeared at the doors the red gowns streamed out by the windows. In five minutes the Orangerie was empty save for the upturned benches and the military. The *coup d'état* had been a grotesque affair, not a shot had been fired, not a man injured; its very grotesqueness made it doubly fatal to the deputies; the red gowns, the paraphernalia of office that strewn the avenues of the park of St. Cloud, could never again impose upon the public: *solvuntur risu tabulæ*.

The *Anciens*, now wholly committed to the *coup d'état*, next took matters into their own hands and, deploring the abdication (*retraite*) of the *Cinq Cents*, proceeded to appoint Sieyès, Ducos, and Bonaparte "provisional consuls". These appointments were confirmed by a rump of the *Cinq Cents* (not more than 150) hurriedly collected during the night, and at the same time two commissions were appointed to deal with the question of a constitution, and the Legislative was adjourned till 20 February, 1800. The *coup d'état* was received with approval, though without any marked enthusiasm, in the capital and the country; and the three provisional consuls

settled down to their task. It was now that Bonaparte, who had not shown any great aptitude for *coups d'état* on 18 Brumaire, and had appeared to a great extent a puppet in the hands of Lucien and Sieyès, stood forward as a true statesman and snatched the fruits of victory from the victors by sheer force of character, vigour, tact, and intellectual ability. He had a conception of the future which differed *toto cælo* from that of Sieyès; he had no idea of a restoration; all reaction was abjured; his conception was to widen the area of support for the Government by leaving the door open to right and left, and at the same time to win for the Government a real claim to popular support by introducing honesty and order into the administration and by restoring glory to French arms and moderation to foreign policy.

The first act of the provisional government was to repeal the Law of Hostages; and Bonaparte went in person to the prisons to liberate those who were suffering under that atrocious measure. Its second act was to repeal the progressive tax and to raise a loan for immediate needs from the bankers of Paris on the strength of a promise of orderly government and respect for property. Meanwhile the question of the necessary alterations in the Constitution was occupying the attention of the provisional government. The Commissions<sup>1</sup> consulted the arch-constitution-monger, Sieyès, and gradually extracted from him the details of a constitution so replete with checks and balances as to be unworkable.<sup>2</sup> Bonaparte raised objections; and an informal committee, comprising the Consuls and the members of the Commissions, began to meet in his rooms at the Luxembourg, if not under his presidency most undoubtedly under the domination of his personality; for it was at these meetings that the Constitution

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 94.

<sup>2</sup> Sieyès' Constitution differed from the Constitution eventually adopted in that it placed the Executive nominally in the hands of a Grand Elector, who was to have immense distinction but practically no power; two Consuls were to control respectively the War and the Peace Departments. It also provided for a Constitutional Jury which was to guard the Constitution, and could, under certain restrictions, override and even remove the Grand Elector and other high officials.

was so revised as to leave him practically omnipotent. Thus revised it was promulgated on 13 December (22 Frimaire), and subsequently adopted by the country by plebiscite.<sup>1</sup> Under

<sup>1</sup> "Constitution of 22 Frimaire An. VIII" (13 December, 1799). (Hélie, "Les Constitutions de la France," pp. 577 *sqq.*) The principal provisions of the Constitution were as follows: Universal adult suffrage exercised with triple indirectness. The electors chose first 500,000 "communal notables," who were eligible for communal office, and in turn chose 50,000 departmental electors, who were eligible for departmental office, and in turn chose 5000 "national notables," from whom the members of the two houses of the Legislature were chosen, as well as the members of the Constitutional Senate.

The Executive was placed nominally in the hands of three Consuls, but virtually all power was in the hands of the First Consul. The Consuls held office for ten years, were appointed in the first instance by the Constitutional Committee, afterwards by the Senate. The First Consul not only promulgated but initiated the laws, and was entrusted with the appointment of practically all the State officials. He had the command of the army, and all executive power was concentrated in his hands. The Second and Third Consuls had a consultative voice; were in fact mere blinds to conceal the absolutism of their colleague. The Executive was served by a Ministry, which by the Constitution was responsible for the acts of the Government, but in practice proved to be the willing servant of the irresponsible First Consul.

The Legislature was bicameral: (1) The Tribune of 100 members nominated by the Senate from the ranks of the "national notabilities" and renewable by fifths each year; its function being to discuss, but not to amend, legislation; (2) The Legislative Body of 300 (similarly nominated and similarly renewable), whose function was to vote but not to discuss legislation. The *Sénat Conservateur* which enjoyed the right to nominate the members of the Legislature was constituted as follows: Sieyès and Ducos were appointed First and Second Senators; they nominated the majority of the sixty to eighty Senators, who then completed the number from lists drawn up by the First Consul, the Tribune, and the Legislative Body. The Senators, who were all "national notables" and had to be at least forty years of age, held office for life. In their hands were the important functions of appointing the Consuls and replenishing the Tribune and Legislative Body. The Senate was by no means a democratic body, and was practically controlled by Sieyès and Ducos, whose influence thus penetrated to the Tribune and Legislative Body. The most original feature of the Constitution was the *Conseil d'État*, which was Bonaparte's own creation; the constitution and functions of this body were scarcely defined, for Bonaparte desired to mould it in his own way, both as a useful advisory body and as a set-off to the Chambers. It developed into a strong committee of experts drawn from all parties and came to be

the Constitution, which is summarized in the note, Bonaparte was unanimously appointed First Consul with Cambacérès and Lebrun as colleagues. Sieyès and Ducos received distinguished but relatively unimportant offices—Sieyès as President of the Senate, Ducos as Senator. Bonaparte became, under a Constitution which was largely of his own making, practically unchecked ruler of France.

It was indeed high time that the government should be set on a proper basis, for the war-cloud in Italy, on the Rhine, and in the East was threatening to break once more, while the civil war in the West of France was spurting up and threatened to hamper the Republic grievously whenever she should come to grapple with the coalition. Bonaparte turned all his energy to the long-delayed pacification of the West, and in a very short time the civil war was at an end. This result he accomplished by a judicious combination of concession with reprisals; the true grievances of the rebel district, in particular the religious grievance, would receive satisfaction, while merciless reprisals would be the lot of the intractable. Probably neither concessions nor reprisals alone would have had the desired effect; the combination, however, was irresistible. This stamping out of the embers of rebellion in the West was

divided into five sections: (1) Finance. (2) Civil administration. (3) War. (4) Marine. (5) Home affairs. It stood for practical as against theoretical, as well as for national as against party, government; also for Bonaparte as against Sieyès, for through it the former was able completely to take the wind out of the sails of the Constitution. Its development and the cunning with which it was built up is eloquent testimony to Bonaparte's political genius.

The first Ministry under the new Constitution was as follows:—

Foreign Office—Talleyrand.

War—Berthier, succeeded by Carnot.

Police—Fouché.

Interior—Lucien Bonaparte.

Justice—Abrial.

Marine—Forfait.

with Maret as Secretary of State. (Maret was to Bonaparte in things civil and political what Berthier was to him in things military.) The Council of State comprised such men as Roederer, Brune, Marmont, Réal, Bénézeck, Chaptal, Fourcroy—all of them experts in some particular branch of government.

marked by the first of those acts of treacherous violence for which Bonaparte afterwards became notorious.<sup>1</sup> Frotté, one of the most celebrated of the rebel leaders, surrendered on the distinct understanding that he would have the benefit of the amnesty. He was tried by court martial and executed. It is difficult to see what advantage Bonaparte expected to derive from this treacherous act; it almost seems that it was less an act of policy than the outcome of some vice of blood which impelled him from time to time to violence and treachery.<sup>2</sup>

With the prospect of soon leaving for the front Bonaparte showed his teeth all round; not only to the rebels in La Vendée, but to the intractable Republicans who murmured at his autocracy. A drastic censorship of press and theatre showed that he was not an autocrat for nothing.<sup>3</sup> To the *émigrés*, on the other hand, and those tainted with Royalism, he continued to show a wise toleration; remedial acts were pushed on and widened; the lists of *émigrés* were at last closed (3 March).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> See the proclamation "Aux habitants des départements de l'ouest" of 28 December, 1799 ("Correspondance," op. cit. vi. 48). See also *ibid.* vi. 69, 70, despatch of Bonaparte to General Hédouville:—

"It would be a salutary example to choose two or three large Communes amongst those which behave worst. Experience shows that in circumstances such as the present a great act of rigour is the most humane thing. Feebleness alone is inhumanity."

<sup>2</sup> Bonaparte was prone to acts of physical violence; on several occasions he kicked and belaboured his ministers; and his behaviour in the presence of European statesmen and potentates was often childish in its violence. There is no doubt that his nerves were not always under control.

<sup>3</sup> Sixty newspapers were suppressed in January, 1800.

<sup>4</sup> So early as 26 December, 1799, Bonaparte had written to Boulay de la Meurthe (President of the Section of Justice of the *Conseil d'État*) to hasten the closing of the lists of *émigrés*. The question of the *émigrés* was extremely delicate, complicated as it was by the question of their confiscated property. It is a proof of Bonaparte's boldness, as well as of his comprehension of broad principles, that he did not hesitate to grasp this nettle. In October, 1800, certain classes of *émigrés* were readmitted; but it was not till after the Peace of Amiens (March, 1802) that Bonaparte was able to declare a general amnesty. Then about 140,000 persons were repatriated.



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The First Consul's eyes were by this time fixed on the position of affairs at the front. His next appearance was to be on the military stage; the first act in his drama of sovereignty was at an end. It was perhaps the most brilliant of all. The weeks between the *coup d'état* of Brumaire and his departure for the front in May, 1800, had been as brilliant politically as the Italian campaign had been from the military point of view. Everything had depended on his genius; one false step and he would have been lost and France with him. During the *coup d'état* he had been at fault—halting and hesitating—after it he was superb. The Constitution was his work; he fashioned his own throne. By vitality, versatility, and sheer force of character, he outplayed Sieyès on his own ground, and obtained exactly the Constitution he required. After that the soundness of his broad principles was visible in his first acts: reparation without reaction, amnesty without weakness, patriotism without party; and above all order and the firm hand gripping every department of the administration. How are we to account for a success at once so rapid and so complete? It was not due to energy alone, though that was almost superhuman. Genius is *not* an infinite capacity for taking pains, but when to genius is added that capacity the result is irresistible. Add to energy and genius a profound sense of the dramatic, an unrivalled power of keeping the finger on the public pulse (for Bonaparte had the instincts of a journalist, which so few men of genius possess) and the result is no longer surprising.

All the First Consul's thoughts were by this time directed to the military situation, and it is time to pick up the threads of the story of the French armies. After the Battle of Novi the situation in Italy was entirely unfavourable to the French. Masséna's victory at Zurich had restored their fortunes in Central Europe. Moreau, who succeeded Masséna, was at the head of some 110,000 to 120,000 men against the 150,000 of Kray, while Masséna, who had been transferred to Italy, had no more than 30,000 men to face the 100,000 of Mélas. To remedy the inferiority of the French armies Bonaparte secretly got together an Army of Reserve (50,000 to 60,000

strong) at Dijon. The obvious course was to reinforce the already considerable army of Moreau to such an extent that he could count on crushing Kray. Moreau, however, a slow and commonplace commander, could not be persuaded to strike a decisive blow in Germany and Bonaparte consequently determined to assign to him and the main army a secondary part and to strike the blow himself in Italy with the Army of Reserve. Moreau was instructed to press the Austrians in order to clear the flank and communications of the Army of Reserve; then he was to be deprived of 30,000 men and to adopt a passive attitude while the blow was struck in Italy. This was, of course, a grave slight to Moreau, and Bonaparte has often been reproached for his treatment of that general. No doubt it suited him very well to take the wind out of Moreau's sails and secure all the laurels for himself, but Moreau had declined to adopt a vigorous initiative; nor would he have been easily persuaded to hand over to Bonaparte the command of the army in Germany. Bonaparte was thus driven by Moreau's sluggishness to the course he now adopted. From the patriotic point of view, therefore, as well as the personal, he was right to demobilize Moreau and strike the blow himself in Italy.<sup>1</sup> By the Constitution the First Consul was precluded from the command of armies. Bonaparte got over this by taking his favourite military agent, Berthier, from the War Office and placing him in command of the Army of Reserve. When the time came the First Consul would proceed to the front in his civil capacity; once at the front there would be no difficulty in effecting the necessary transformation.

While Moreau was delaying to push on the necessary clearing movement, events were marching in Italy. Mélas took Savona and thus thrust himself between the two French armies; Masséna shut himself up in Genoa, while Suchet withdrew towards the French frontier. The Austrians, thus

<sup>1</sup> Confirmation of this may be derived from the knowledge that Carnot, who succeeded Berthier as Minister for War, accepted responsibility for the plan, and even went in person to the front to persuade Moreau to give up troops to Bonaparte.

engaged in the Italian Riviera, had left the plains of Lombardy open to Bonaparte's attack. On 4 May the First Consul announced his intention of proceeding to Dijon to inspect the Army of Reserve. As he was on the point of departure came the news of the first of Moreau's successes at Stockach, Moeskirch, and Biberach (3-10 May); the difficult operation of the crossing of the Alps might be begun without danger to the communications of the army, but by the St. Bernard not by the Simplon and St. Gothard as Bonaparte had at first planned.

Bonaparte left Paris on 6 May and proceeded with the utmost rapidity to throw his army across the great St. Bernard. This operation occupied from the 14th to the 22nd; then he pushed on straight for Milan, arriving there on 2 June. This movement sealed the fate of Masséna's army. The General, who had prolonged the defence of Genoa beyond the limits of human endurance, was compelled to surrender (4 June), marching out with the honours of war. Bonaparte had not crossed the Alps in order merely to relieve a besieged city. He had been blamed (by Lanfrey for instance) for not marching direct on Turin and Genoa, for "feasting at Milan while Masséna was starving," but the relief of isolated garrisons, however brave, is not the object of war. As a matter of fact had he marched on Genoa he would have exposed his communications, for Fort Bard at the Italian egress of the St. Bernard pass was not taken till 2 June; he was therefore perfectly right to move on Milan. By doing so he was not only able to establish a new base at Zurich and a new line of communications via the St. Gothard, by which pass the reinforcements detached from Moreau joined him, but also to place himself across the enemy's line of retreat and prevent reinforcements reaching him. The advance on Milan was in fact the turning point of the campaign, the touch that converted the ordinary into the sublime. After the fall of Genoa (4 June) Bonaparte's one object was to bring the Austrians to a decisive action as quickly as possible. He had detached troops to prevent Mélas' escape northwards, while Desaix was sent south to stop them in the direction of Genoa.

This was necessary in consequence of Masséna's surrender: Mélas might have shifted his base to Genoa and the English fleet. The net which Bonaparte had spread was in fact very wide and very fragile. Would it break when the strain came? One force of Austrians was defeated with heavy loss by Lannes and Victor on 9 June at Montebello. But Mélas concentrated 31,000 men at Alessandria; the French had almost equal numbers.<sup>1</sup> The two forces met on 14 June, in the plain where the Bormida converges towards the Po in front of Alessandria. The battle, which was stubbornly contested, at first went against the French. Mélas had even left the field assured of victory when Desaix's arrival enabled the First Consul to fight a second battle and completely reverse the result. Desaix himself was killed, and it was a magnificent cavalry charge, led by his subordinate Kellermann, that finally turned the fortunes of the day.

The consequences of the victory of Marengo were decisive—more decisive indeed than the battle itself warranted. Mélas' army had not been destroyed as Bonaparte had intended. Moreau's failure to send the full complement of troops (he sent 18,000 not 30,000), Masséna's surrender, and the consequent necessity of throwing troops between Mélas and Genoa, had complicated the campaign and placed an overwhelming victory out of Bonaparte's reach, had indeed for a moment almost involved him in disaster. But Mélas' nerve had broken down, and in a fit of despair he had withdrawn his army behind the Mincio surrendering all Italy west of that river to the French. On 2 July (at 2 a.m.) Bonaparte quietly re-entered the Tuileries. "Well, gentlemen," he said to his colleagues on their first meeting after his return, "have you done much work since I left you?" "Not so much as you, general," was the answer. And it was a true one, for seldom has work so important been accomplished in so short a time. Marengo was important rather because it secured Bonaparte's previously precarious power, than for its effect on the course of the war and the stability of the coalition; its main

<sup>1</sup> The figures at Marengo were Austrians 28,000, French 22,800 plus Desaix' troops 5000 = 27,800. "Der Schlachterfolg" (1903).

effect was on internal rather than external politics. So far as Bonaparte's career went everything had been at stake. Never was human being in a more anxious situation than was Bonaparte during the crisis of Marengo, when for a moment all seemed lost and everything was in the hands of fortune.

As it was his rapid rise and the vigorous nature of his absolutism had roused enemies in many directions. There were many plots against him, one of which nearly terminated his career. On 24 December, 1800, an infernal machine was thrown at his carriage when he was on his way to the opera. Several persons were killed but the First Consul escaped. The author of the plot was the Chouan leader Georges Cadoudal; but Bonaparte did not hesitate to seize the opportunity to strike at the Radicals whom he regarded as the most dangerous of his opponents. One hundred and thirty of these innocent, but no doubt objectionable and dangerous, people were sentenced to deportation.

Marengo, though it meant so much to Bonaparte, did not end the war. The First Consul indicated his willingness to treat on the lines of Campo Formio; but Austria, partly from pride, partly from treaty obligations to England, declined his advances. The internal victory having been won in Italy by Bonaparte, the European victory remained to be won by Moreau on the Danube. Moreau had been fighting a steady and successful campaign during the summer; he had driven the Austrians back step by step, first to the Iller then to the Isar; the Battle of Hochstädt (19 June) placed all Bavaria as far as the latter river in his hands. Then ensued a pause during which negotiations, sincere on Bonaparte's side but insincere on that of Austria, were in progress. But in November these negotiations were broken off, and Moreau commenced his advance to the Isar where the Archduke John was entrenched; the Archduke, abandoning strong positions, came out to meet the French and was completely routed with a loss of 20,000 men in the Battle of Hohenlinden (2 December, 1800), which brought the war to a close. Moreau advanced to within sixty-five miles of Vienna and then signed an armistice which, by detaching Austria from England, broke up the coalition.

Meanwhile Macdonald had been sent over the Splügen pass to reinforce Brune who had taken over the Italian command. The Austrians were driven back over the Adige and the Tagliamento, and on 16 January, 1801, the Armistice of Treviso gave the French the line of the former river. Murat reduced Naples to terms (Convention of Foligno, developing into Treaty of Florence, March, 1801).

Austria had thus been thoroughly beaten both in Italy and in Germany, and was obliged to accept terms less favourable than those which had been offered in the previous year. On 9 February, 1801, was signed the Treaty of Lunéville, by which the Rhine frontier, so long and ardently desired by France, was at length recognized, with the addition of Belgium and Luxemburg, while France's right to a voice in the settlement of the compensation of the dispossessed German princes was acknowledged. In Italy the Cisalpine Republic was reconstituted, while Piedmont was occupied and shortly afterwards annexed to France. The Grand Duke of Tuscany was dethroned and received a guarantee of compensation in Germany like the Duke of Modena before him. Austria retained Venice, but in every other part of the peninsula the French power predominated.

Austria was thus eliminated from the coalition and the moment of England's isolation seemed to have arrived. Spain had been gained over to France by the proffered bribe of Tuscany for the Queen's daughter (Treaty of Ildefonso, 1 October, 1800). In the following year Spain agreed to hand over Parma<sup>1</sup> and Elba to France, together with her rights in Louisiana; and in May, 1801, a Spanish army invaded Portugal in French interests to compel England's steadfast ally to desert her. The Czar Paul I, who was by this time fascinated by the First Consul and much tempted by Bonaparte's offer to restore Malta, was hastening to detach himself from the coalition; while in the north was formed a great neutral league directed against the maritime ascendancy of England; Russia, Sweden, Denmark, and Prussia laid down conditions

<sup>1</sup> Parma was a Bourbon Dukedom, but the Duke was married to a Spanish princess.

which were to apply to the ships of neutral powers, blockades, and the like, and the acceptance of which would have undermined Britain's naval supremacy. Bonaparte was immensely gratified at the Neutral League of the North and the advances of the Czar, and began to make preparations for a descent on England, while he dreamt of the recovery of Egypt and the invasion of India. He was rudely awakened by two highly sensational events—the murder of the Czar Paul on 28 March, 1801, and the Battle of Copenhagen on 2 April. The first event put an end to the contemplated Franco-Russian *entente*, for the new Czar Alexander hastened to restore the alliance of Russia with England; the second shivered to pieces the Neutral League of the North almost before it had come into existence. Bonaparte had run his head for the second time against the stone wall with which he was to be confronted throughout his career; he was as far as ever from the destruction of England. It was coming home to him that by the peace of Lunéville and the subsequent developments he had annexed as much as he could conveniently organize and that an interval for recuperation was needful. Abandoning therefore the idea of immediately reducing England to submission, he began to search for the best means of inducing her to make terms favourable to France. This project was greatly facilitated by the replacement of Pitt by Addington,<sup>1</sup> who took office with the express intention of terminating hostilities. All the summer of 1801 the terms of peace between England and France were under discussion. On 1 October preliminaries were signed, and on 27 March, 1802, after prolonged attempts on the part of England to modify the terms, the Peace of Amiens was concluded.<sup>2</sup> Of her conquests Great Britain retained only Ceylon and Trinidad; the former she had taken from Holland, the latter from Spain. The Prince of Orange was to receive an indemnity; Portuguese and Turkish integrity were guaranteed; Malta was to be restored to the Knights; France was to evacuate Naples and the States of the Church; Britain her

<sup>1</sup> 14 March, 1801.

<sup>2</sup> It was published in Paris on Easter Day (18 April), 1802, simultaneously with the Concordat.

conquests in the Mediterranean; Egypt was to be handed back to Turkey. Great Britain, in fact, made enormous sacrifices for a peace which was bound to be ephemeral. Peace with Russia had also been concluded on 8 October, 1801, France abandoning the cause of the Poles in return for a corresponding abandonment of the Bourbons by the Czar.

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## CHAPTER XXXI

### NAPOLEON

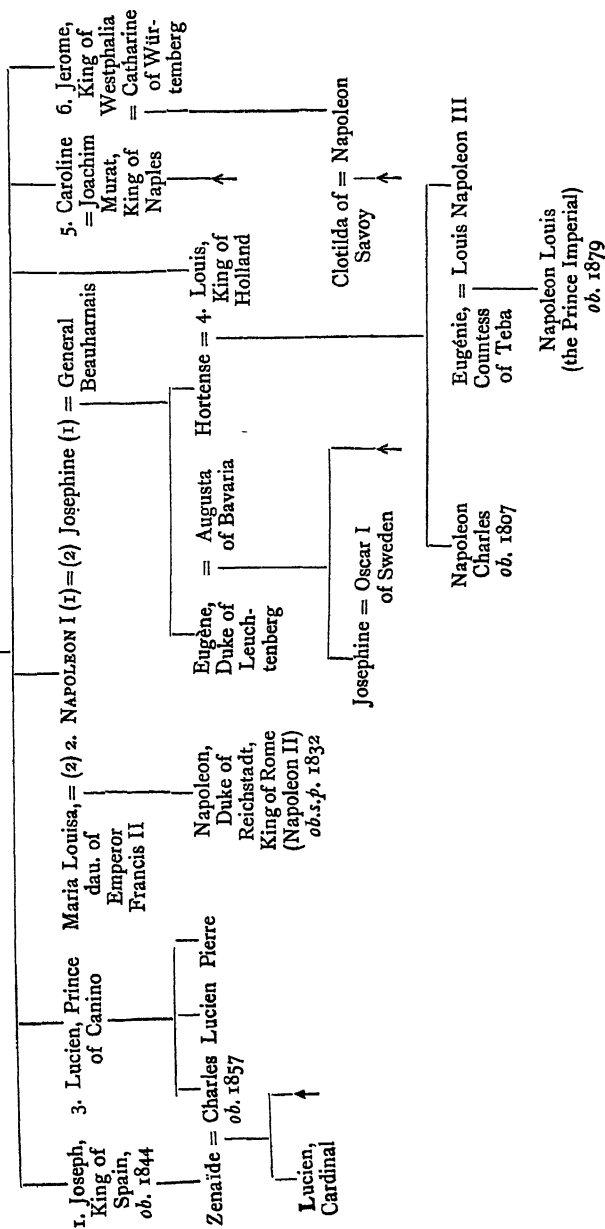
(1802-1805)

IT is not probable that Bonaparte believed in 1802 in the possibility of an enduring peace with England. The antagonism of interests was too profound; France was committed to a death struggle with England for the Colonial Empire which had been thrown away in the eighteenth century and which England had picked up. But a period of recuperation at this juncture was imperative for France. It was on the sea that the great struggle with England would have to be decided, and naval preparations are necessarily lengthy; for this purpose, therefore, every additional day of peace was of value to France. Every keel<sup>1</sup> laid down—and they were laid down with feverish rapidity—brought France on to terms of greater equality with her rival. It was not, however, for this reason alone that peace was acceptable to Bonaparte in 1802. He was not only anxious to build up a fleet, he desired to establish a dynasty, and he wished also to prove that he was an adept in the arts of peace as well as a superlative soldier. There were innumerable matters of internal administration and organization demanding consideration, to each of which he was eager to apply his versatile intellect and clarifying commonsense. Italy had to be settled; the colonies acquired during the recent war had to be organized and the affairs of Germany, Holland, and Switzerland claimed attention. The chaotic social and legal changes of the Revolu-

<sup>1</sup> But it must not be forgotten that it was not purely a question of keels but also one of personnel; it was her superiority in the latter respect rather than in mere numbers of ships that assured the ultimate triumph of England at sea.

# THE DYNASTY OF NAPOLEON

Charles Bonaparte = Letitia Ramolino.



tion required co-ordination and modification; in a hundred directions Bonaparte saw opportunities for the operation of his genius. For all these reasons, therefore, peace was extremely welcome to France. It was in fact an interlude necessary for the consolidation of Bonaparte's power. And just in proportion as peace was desirable to France it was injurious to her rival; indeed it is difficult to understand why, but for the alarming economic and financial condition of the country, the British Government agreed to it. Public opinion in England denounced it—and not without justice—as “a sieve through which the maritime supremacy of Great Britain would trickle away”. This being so, it was idle to regard the Peace of Amiens as anything more than a truce, which for the sake of France must be maintained as long as possible and for the sake of England must be broken as early as possible.<sup>1</sup> As it turned out the peace lasted for little more than a year (March, 1802, to May, 1803); but there was a certain amount of overlap at both ends during which hostilities were on a restricted scale so far at any rate as land operations were concerned.

It has been said with some truth of this period that it disputes with the last ten years of the reign of Henry IV the claim to be the brightest epoch in the history of France. It was the period of Bonaparte's remedial activity. Not that he had waited for the conclusion of peace to initiate his schemes; much had already been done. In particular the comprehensive measure of local government under which France is still administered had been introduced as early as 17 February, 1800. In each department an official called a *préfet* with powers, not unlike those of the *intendants* of the *ancien régime*, was appointed by the First Consul, in each *arrondissement* a *sous-préfet*, in each *commune* a mayor, all similarly appointed, and all responsible to the Ministry of Interior. Thus perished the elective system of local government prematurely established in the early days of the Revolution; it had become inefficient and corrupt and the re-establishment of centralized bureau-

<sup>1</sup> See Coquelle, “Napoleon and England, 1803-13” (trans. G. D. Knox, London, 1904), ch. 1.

cracy proved most satisfactory, and is an enduring witness to Bonaparte's sagacity.

Another great problem had exercised Bonaparte's attention from the moment when he had assumed the reigns of government—the problem of the finances. All this administrative activity would have been useless if the finances of the country had been left in the dreadful chaos to which the Revolution had reduced them. For eight years this chaos had been getting steadily worse. In 1796 the paper-money stood at 340 to 1; that is to say, the security of the State had reached vanishing point. The only solution which the Directory could conceive was the solution of bankruptcy, and that it tried in several forms, two-thirds of the public debt being written off in 1798. Even so drastic an expedient might have contributed to the restoration of order had it been accompanied by economy and financial reforms. But neither economy nor reform was compatible with directorial government, so that national bankruptcy was only added to the other financial evils instead of marking their disappearance. The inevitable result was the refusal of the harassed and defrauded public to pay taxes. Such was the condition of affairs when Bonaparte applied his mind to the financial question. It was not in the power of any human being to bring immediate order out of such chaos. The new Government was obliged to resort to measures as arbitrary as the old; but it did so with the intention of terminating the disorder, not of increasing it. There were further repudiations of the public debt and further loans, but the collection of taxes and the assessment of property were quickly placed on a proper footing; a good sinking fund was established; the small remnant of the *biens nationaux* was brought under wise management. Confidence was restored; on 18 January, 1800, the *Caisse des comptes courants*, the most substantial of the Paris financial houses, was converted into the Bank of France with a capital of 30,000,000 francs. This institution was closely identified with the Government finance. Government annuities were paid over its counter; it financed national lotteries and had the exclusive privilege of issuing bank-notes; and by 1803 there was an actual surplus.

Meanwhile Bonaparte was spreading reforms and improvements wherever he went. Public works on the most lavish scale were initiated in every direction, and there was practically no department of social life in which he did not make his energy felt. Roads and bridges were renewed, and rapid travel became possible between Paris and the chief centres of Europe; internal navigation on a vast scale was planned and initiated; every kind of engineering improvement was undertaken; the seaports were enlarged and strengthened; the royal palaces were rebuilt, and great museums were founded to receive the spoils of the continent; French manufactures were revived, large numbers of English mechanics being brought to France; the new industrial machinery was introduced and even improved on, and France began to compete on more even terms in the great international struggle of industries.

But the most celebrated of the fruits of this period was the codification of French law. The idea of gathering up all the shreds and fragments of French law<sup>1</sup> and of reducing to order the clumsy legislation of the Revolution had long been in Bonaparte's mind, and he did not actually wait for the general peace to set about it. So early as August, 1800, a small committee of lawyers<sup>2</sup> had been appointed to draft a civil code. This draft was submitted to the law-courts, whose criticisms, together with the draft itself, were sent up to the Council of State.

It is often said that Bonaparte in this matter did no more than set the ball rolling, and this is so far true that the First Consul was wise enough to see that a matter so technical demanded the attention of experts; but he frequently presided over the deliberations of the Council, and it was his fierce energy that pushed the codes through in a startlingly brief time; and his vivid intellect and balanced judgment left an

<sup>1</sup> A civil and criminal code had long been promised, the former by the Constitution of 1791, and Committees had sat and kept reporting throughout the period of the Convention and Directory, but the Government was too much occupied with other tasks to do anything further.

<sup>2</sup> The committee was Tronchet, Portalis, Bigot de Préameneau and Maleville.

indelible mark on their contents.<sup>1</sup> The hasty legislation of the Revolution had in most instances gone too far, and the code went a long way to rectify this. It limited the powers of adoption, relegated bastards almost to the position they had occupied before the Revolution, and restored parental authority; it also remedied the excessive subdivision of property by modifying the revolutionary legislation on the subject of inheritance. Entail was reintroduced, but could only extend to one generation; and, while subdivision was still encouraged, considerable inequalities of division amongst heirs were sanctioned. Women were reduced to a condition of complete subordination.

As to the marriage-law, Bonaparte held that divorce by mutual consent was preferable to judicial separation and a necessary supplement to divorce for specific causes. The former he endeavoured to hedge in with such safeguards as the consent of the relations, and the latter he modified by reducing the admissible specific causes from five to three. The law of tenure of property as established in the revolutionary legislation was retained in the Civil Code, but the regulations which governed the transfer of property were modified to protect the vendor against the professional financier, a person whom Napoleon regarded with wholehearted dislike. The transference to the State of the power to fix and regulate the rate of interest was a further thrust at the same class. Another innovation was the provision, under certain reservations, for the registration of mortgages.

Napoleon was perhaps guilty of exaggeration when he asserted that, more than all his victorious campaigns, the Civil Code was his special glory. Nevertheless it was a wonderful piece of work. It bears, indeed, traces of haste, and is open to criticism in many points, but these criticisms are generally speaking put forward by persons who misunderstand the true scope of any code, demanding of it that it should be a complete *corpus juris*, whereas its real value is as a simple table of principles, familiarizing the plain man with

<sup>1</sup> Especially in the clauses which dealt with divorce, and the relative equality of the sexes, upon which subjects his views were very pronounced.

the general trend and governing ideas of the law of the State in which he lives. As such the Civil Code of Napoleon was pre-eminently successful; and perhaps to even too great an extent it has commanded the respect and assent of generations of Frenchmen.<sup>1</sup>

To the Civil Code were added a Code of Civil Procedure, based on the ancient practice of the Court of the *Châtelet*; a Code of Criminal Procedure and Penal Law, remarkable for the wide latitude it gave to the arbitrary use of the executive power against the freedom of individuals; a Penal Code, which imposed cruel penalties on political and criminal offenders, and a Commercial Code, the weakest and most hurried of the five.<sup>2</sup>

The construction of this constellation of codes was necessarily an operation which demanded time; the Civil Code was not finally passed until March, 1804, that of Criminal Procedure came into force in 1808, the Penal Code in 1810; the Commercial Code was passed in 1807. The reason for referring to them at this point is that it was now, when he was freed from the immediate strain of war, that the First Consul began to turn his attention to the task of codifying French Law, and gave to this process the incentive and inspiration which bore fruit by degrees at different periods when the author was once more absorbed in the continental struggle.

More important than the codes, and more thorny even than the question of the finances was the question of the relations between Church and State. To arrive at an understanding with the Holy See, and to make a settlement of the Church questions which would render it possible for loyal Catholics to recognize the Consulate, would be a great advantage to that Government and at the same time a deadly blow to the Royalists: for Royalism relied above all things upon the

<sup>1</sup> There is an excellent summary and appreciation of the codes in Mr. Fisher's chapter in the "Cambridge Modern History," Vol. IX.

<sup>2</sup> It should be remembered in this connexion that, during his period of conquests, the codes were, so to speak, an essential part of Napoleon's political luggage. In this way they were spread over a large part of Western Europe, and in some places they have stood to the present day.



support of the Catholics, who had been alienated from the Government by all the anti-religious excesses of the Revolution. Napoleon's religious convictions were peculiar; he believed that religion was an absolute necessity to make men submit to the social inequalities which he regarded as inevitable. Beyond this he did not go, holding as he did that every nation ought to observe the religion best suited to its condition. In the East, therefore, as we have seen, he had made overtures to Islam;<sup>1</sup> but for France he had no doubt that Roman Catholicism was the best religion and he conscientiously desired to end the war which the Revolution had declared on Rome. Before he left Italy, after Marengo, therefore, he had made ostentatious overtures through the Cardinal Bishop of Vercelli to the Holy See, declaring that he would make the Pope "a present of 30,000,000 French Catholics". At the same time he denounced the "intruded clergy" as "discreditable robbers".<sup>2</sup> His object was to re-establish a form of Gallicanism which should be subordinate to Rome in purely spiritual matters but independent in Church policy. He was not the first French ruler who had been confronted with this puzzle, nor was he destined to be the last. But it is interesting to see his clear intellect dealing with this supremely difficult problem.

It was during the lull in hostilities that preceded the Treaty of Amiens that Napoleon began to give serious attention to this question. By this time he was thinking of an imperial crown; he desired "to have the little phial broken over his head,"<sup>3</sup> and by whom if not by the Pope?

<sup>1</sup> "If he ruled over a nation of Jews," he said, "he would rebuild the temple" (Roederer, "Journal," p. 16). Mohammedanism had a real attraction for him, and he spoke of it at St. Helena with admiration: for "it conquered half the world in ten years". He had of course been born a Catholic, but his early connexions had not been favourable to the expansion of his religious beliefs. Nevertheless he was at no time in his life a mere unbeliever, nor the materialist he sometimes took credit for being. Rather, although he was alive to the difficulties of religious problems, he was keenly aware of the existence of mysteries and problems of human existence, for which, outside religion, there was no solution.

<sup>2</sup> Nielsen, "The Papacy in the Nineteenth Century" (trans. Mason, 1906), I. 221 sqq.

<sup>3</sup> Lafayette's words.

Moreover there could be no more solid basis for a world-wide empire than alliance with the Papacy. Formal negotiations had begun in November, 1800, and on 20 June, 1801, Cardinal Consalvi, the Papal Secretary of State, nicknamed the "Siren" on account of his persuasiveness, had arrived in Paris, as legate *a latere* to discuss the terms of a Concordat between France and the Holy See. Napoleon displayed even more than his usual cunning; he first cajoled and then bullied the legate, and even went so far as to attempt to entrap him into signing a supposititious draft agreement which he had prepared. Another draft he tore up in a rage and threw into the fire. The chief point of disagreement concerned the nature of the police regulations under which public worship was to be allowed; over this negotiations were nearly broken off. Suddenly Napoleon gave way and agreed to sign the Concordat with the provision against which he had fought so long. A clever and unscrupulous idea had occurred to him. Arrangements would have to be made for the carrying out of the Concordat and Bonaparte saw that he could introduce into these provisions (which would be a purely internal affair and would not require the Pope's signature) all the necessary restrictions and safeguards. This was afterwards done in the document known as the "Organic Articles," against which the Pope protested vainly. It was a characteristic dodge, at once unscrupulous and thoroughly effective.

The provisions of the Concordat and Organic Articles are best set side by side: The Concordat laid it down that the Roman Church was the "Religion of the great majority of French Citizens" (much powder and shot had been expended over this definition); and that it should have liberty of worship and a public service under certain reservations. Secondly, it provided for a redistribution (*nouvelle circonscription*) of dioceses. The number was eventually fixed at sixty (ten metropolitan and fifty diocesan). Within three months the First Consul was to nominate the new bishops, to whom the Pope was to give canonical institution. The clergy (bishops and priests) were to swear an oath of allegiance to the Republic, and a prayer for the Republic and Consuls was to be included

in the services of the Church. Finally, bishops were to select priests pleasing to the Government. The Pope was not to interfere with the confiscated Church property, while the State was to provide adequate stipends (*traitement convenable*) for the clergy. The Organic Articles, on the other hand, laid it down that no bull or papal missive was to be circulated without the sanction of the Government, that legates and nuncios must receive the same sanction; that the decrees of no Catholic synod were to be published, and no French synod or council was to take place without permission. Church services were to be gratuitous; the *Conseil d'état* was set up as final Court of Ecclesiastical Appeal. The clergy were to have no exemptions in the face of the law. There were to be no ecclesiastical titles (e.g. *Monseigneur*, etc.). Bishops were not to be under thirty years of age and were to be Frenchmen; they were not to leave their dioceses without the sanction of Government. No festivals except Sunday were to be observed without permission. The costume of the clergy was defined; no religious ceremony was to be held outside the churches in districts where other forms of religion existed. Marriage in church was to follow civil marriage. The stipend of an archbishop was fixed at 15,000 francs, that of a bishop at 10,000; the clergy were to receive from 1000 to 1500, with house and garden.

The religious settlement thus concluded and promulgated on Easter Day<sup>1</sup> (18 April), 1802 (at the same moment as the Peace of Amiens) was immensely to the advantage of France; and as Napoleon brought it to a successful issue in the teeth of the Jacobins, the Generals, the Legislative, and the existing (constitutional) clergy, it must be regarded as one of his greatest triumphs. It made an end of the Civil Constitution, which had been the most disastrous act of the Revolution; it deprived the Bourbons of the support of the devout Catholics, and once more established religion on a secure and, on the whole, reasonable basis; a step which was highly popular in non-political circles, that is to say with the majority of French-

<sup>1</sup> The Concordat was signed 26 Messidor An IX (15 July, 1801), ratified 10 September, 1801, promulgated 18 April, 1802.

men. In the prosecution of his ends Napoleon had shown the highest ability. He had been at the same moment *rusé* and frank, blustering and conciliatory, and had in the end fairly trapped the Papacy by the expedient of the Organic Articles. At the same time it must not be forgotten that—immediate triumph though it was—the religious settlement of 1801-2 bore within it the seeds of future trouble. The Papacy was as Italian and as *rusé* as Napoleon himself; Greek had met Greek, and if the one could extract an immediate triumph the other was merely reserving a later and perhaps even more complete success for itself; and if Bonaparte found in the Concordat the means of subordinating the Church as a political body to the State, the Papacy eventually found in it the means of crushing the spiritual force of Gallicanism, and forcing the Church of France into the ultramontane mould by means of the authority which the Concordat—and even more the Organic Articles<sup>1</sup>—had given to the bishops over the priests. The Concordat, in fact, immediate triumph as it was, rang the knell of Gallicanism. In his hurry to secure religious support Napoleon had neglected to provide the proper safeguards for the preservation of the independence of the national church.

Another remarkable reform, which was not, however, completed till 1808,<sup>2</sup> was the resuscitation of the University. The Universities of France, including the historic University of Paris, had all been destroyed in the Revolution. The new University which Napoleon founded on the ruins of the old is the greatest illustration of the logical centralization of his Latin brain. The entire educational system of France was gathered up into one great corporation, with its centre in Paris. That centralization, carried even to its extreme logical conclusions, suits the genius of the French nation is proved by the fact that this institution continues to exist. The "Legion

<sup>1</sup> The Organic Articles by reducing the number of parish priests and increasing the number of *vicaires*, the latter being dependent on the bishops, brought the clergy into dependence on the Papacy. It is curious that this consequence should have escaped Napoleon (Nielsen, op. cit. I. 256).

<sup>2</sup> The final constitution of the new "University of France" was by laws of May, 1806, and March, 1808.

of Honour," which was founded on 19 May, 1802, was an even more characteristic institution of Napoleon. Recognizing the need of rewards and honours for services to the State, he desired to institute an order which should not smack of the old regime. The legion was to comprise fifteen cohorts with varying grades; ultimately there were some 30,000 legionaries. Both in its Roman form and in the setting up of honour rather than duty as its criterion of merit, the legion was typical of its founder and of the nation over which he ruled.

Amidst all this remedial legislation the unfortunate position of the *émigrés* was not forgotten. The First Consul carried into practice the principle of employing men of all shades of opinion and ostracizing none, and on 26 April, 1802, an act of the Senate extended amnesty to all *émigrés* (with a few exceptions). By this wise and generous measure some 150,000 persons were repatriated.

While Bonaparte was thus occupied with the regeneration of France he had not been forgetful of his own personal position. The Peace of Amiens had not long been signed when, cleverly reading public opinion, he dropped the hint that the prolongation of the Consulship for the term of his life would be acceptable to him. The Tribune and Senate, however, did not rise to the suggestion and were inclined to go no further than a ten years' extension of the Consulship. The First Consul declined this honour until the nation had been consulted, then clinched the matter by submitting to a plebiscite the question "Shall Napoleon Bonaparte be consul for life?" The answer was emphatic, the ayes made were over 3,000,000, the noes a few thousands.<sup>1</sup> Thus the first step was taken on the road to Empire (10 May, 1802). It provoked the hostility of many genuine republicans, and in the summer a conspiracy, in which several of the Generals were involved and of which Bernadotte was the ring-leader, had to be suppressed. Secure in his new position, Bonaparte propounded a modification of the Constitution of the year

<sup>1</sup> 3,568,885 to 8,374.

VIII, known as the "Constitution of the Year X,"<sup>1</sup> which made him practically omnipotent.

Meanwhile it was becoming increasingly clear that the truce with England could not endure much longer. Bonaparte's aggressions in various parts of Europe—Italy, Holland, and Switzerland—were infractions of the Treaty of Lunéville rather than of that of Amiens, but even if they had not been infractions of any treaty they were sufficient in themselves to provoke a rupture. On 4 September, 1802, Piedmont had been incorporated with France as a province of six departments, and in June, 1802, the Ligurian Republic (Genoa) had been bound more closely to France, while in the Cisalpine or Italian Republic, as it now came to be called, Bonaparte accepted the office of President (January, 1802). Lucca, Tuscany, and Etruria were drawn closely to France, and in August, 1802, Elba was annexed. Already it is probable he was dreaming of that revival (in his own favour) of the kingdom of Italy which was not actually effected until May, 1805. These encroachments in Italy constituted a menace to the British power in the Mediterranean as well as a threat to Austria, and were in themselves a long step towards a rupture. They prompted that refusal of Great Britain to carry out the evacuation of Malta in accordance with treaty stipulations, which caused the ultimate outbreak of hostilities.

In Germany the attitude of the French Government was equally alarming; there the burning question was that of the indemnification of the princes who had been dispossessed by the terms of Rastadt and Lunéville. This opened the whole question of the ecclesiastical principalities. Bonaparte advocated with ardour the traditional revolutionary policy of a

<sup>1</sup> "Constitution of the Year X" (Hélie, *op. cit.* 685). The Consuls were appointed for life. The First Consul nominated the Second and Third to the Senate. If the first two names he proposed were rejected the third had to be elected. This put the game entirely in his hands. The First Consul might nominate his successor in exactly the same way as he nominated the junior consuls. He retained all the powers of the Constitution of An VIII *plus* those of ratifying treaties of peace and alliance. The Senate was raised from 66 to 120, appointed by and presided over by the First Consul and with extensive powers. It could dissolve the Legislative Body and the Tribune and even suspend the Constitution.

general secularization. This meant profit to Austria and even more to Prussia, but to the Empire the beginning of the end. Assisted by the greed of the two great German powers, Bonaparte successfully imposed his policy, and began that process of undermining the Empire which ended in its destruction in 1806.

Very menacing, too, were the proceedings of Bonaparte in Switzerland, where by the "Act of Mediation" (19 February, 1803), which divided the country into nineteen cantons, he brought the Swiss into the position of clients of France. But the gravest of Bonaparte's provocations was his occupation of the Batavian Republic in direct contravention of the Treaty of Lunéville.<sup>1</sup> Great Britain has always been sensitive about the independence of Holland, and Napoleon's action in this quarter was sufficient in itself to cause a renewal of the war.

Great Britain's answer to this wanton provocation was a refusal to hand over Malta, as she was bound to do by the Treaty of Amiens, to the Knights of the Order of St. John. This refusal roused Bonaparte to fury and provoked the celebrated scenes with Lord Whitworth; if such a thing were permitted, he declared, "treaties would have to be veiled in crape," and "rather than see the English in Malta he would see them in the Faubourg St. Antoine". This rhodomontade was no doubt intended to thrust the responsibility for the rupture on to England. It is difficult to understand Bonaparte's motives for desiring war, but there can be little doubt that at this time he greatly under-estimated the strength and determination of England. Nothing was more remarkable during these years in which he was at war with her alone than his incorrigible contempt not only for her statesmen but for her fleet and its commanders, unless it was his confidence in his ability to paralyse his rival, cross the channel, and dictate peace from London. The occupation of Holland was not, however, the only provocation which Bonaparte gave to England. The embargo which the First Consul placed on English goods touched her on her tenderest part, and she likewise viewed with grave alarm his attempts to revive

<sup>1</sup> The Treaty of Lunéville (Art. XI) had stipulated for the evacuation of Holland *after the conclusion of peace with England* (Coquelle, op. cit. pp. 16, 17). It had also guaranteed the independence of Switzerland.

France's Colonial Empire. An expedition was despatched to San Domingo in 1802, which met with unexpectedly resolute opposition from the negro president, Toussaint Louverture. In 1803 the island was abandoned. A projected attempt to develop French power in Louisiana, which had been surrendered by Spain to France in 1800, also came to nothing.

War was declared on 18 May, 1803, and declared by England not by France; nevertheless it was undoubtedly France rather than England that provoked the rupture. Bonaparte at once seized every English subject within his grasp; in May Mortier invaded Hanover and, in June, closed the Elbe and the Weser to English ships, while St. Cyr led an army into the territories of England's ally Naples. Before the close of the year Bonaparte had provided himself with the sinews of war by the sale of Louisiana to the United States for 80,000,000 francs (30 April, 1803).<sup>1</sup> But although France and England were now once more at war, neither side was really ready to act. England, it is true, could and did inflict injury on the colonies and the allies and dependencies of France (Holland and later Spain)—she seized Santa Lucia, Tobago, and the Dutch possessions of Demerara, Essequibo, Berbice and Surinam—but the coalition by which alone she could hope to act on the offensive was not yet formed. Russia, indeed, under the new Czar, Alexander I, was rapidly swinging round and preparations were concerted for joint action in Naples. Austria, however, was worn out by her previous exertions and could only be brought slowly into action. Prussia was set on her selfish policy of neutrality. Sweden was a certain ally and Naples undertook to do what she could. Nevertheless the fact remains that in 1803 the "Third Coalition" was all to make.

And if England was unprepared so also was France. For the present her only declared enemy was England, and the superior navy by which alone England could be directly injured was still unbuilt. Thus if England had a coalition, France had a navy, to make. All that Bonaparte could do

<sup>1</sup> See Gayarré, "History of Louisiana" (New Orleans, 1885), III. 524. Eighty million francs, of which 20,000,000 was to be assigned to the payment of what was due by France to citizens of the United States,



was to endeavour to make use of the navies of other powers; Portugal was compelled to give a 16,000,000 francs subsidy and a favourable commercial treaty (December, 1803); Genoa to supply 4000 sailors (February, 1804). But it was not till the close of 1804 that Bonaparte was able to drag Spain with him, and even then he had not eliminated, but only reduced, the naval odds in favour of England. It was in this dilemma, confronted with an enemy whose armour he could not penetrate, that Bonaparte reverted to the old directorial plan for inflicting injury upon England which afterwards came to be known as the "Continental System". The idea was to close the ports of Europe to British and colonial goods, and so to ruin the "paymaster of Europe" and make the threatened coalition impossible. The execution of this plan was difficult in the extreme. The attempt to enforce it led Bonaparte to destruction; but after the rupture of the Peace of Amiens, it certainly caused both discomfort and alarm in England.

Both sides, therefore, were in a peculiar position, willing to wound and yet unable to strike, and it is on this account that the period of peace seems to overlap the moment of the actual rupture. The antagonists were sparring but had not grappled. England bent herself to the creation of the necessary coalition, France to that of the necessary navy, while, failing that, she attempted to inflict financial injury on her enemy. Thus for a little longer the centre of interest continues to be political rather than naval or military. Bonaparte saw in the fresh crisis the opportunity for completing his ascendancy at home. In the early months of 1804 there were signs of serious opposition to his policy from a union of moderate Republicanism and Royalism. Georges Cadoudal, the Chouan leader, had come to France in the previous autumn (August) as the agent of Louis XVIII. He was followed by Pichegru (January) and other prominent Royalists, and an attempt was made to secure the co-operation of Moreau in a great plot against Bonaparte. The First Consul caused Moreau to be arrested (15 February); then Cadoudal; then the rest of the conspirators. Next he determined to take an even more extreme step. With unpardonable treachery he had the Duc d'Enghien kidnapped out of the

territory of Baden, and on 21 March this unfortunate prince of the house of Condé was summarily shot by sentence of a court martial. The only shadow of extenuation for this abominable outrage lay in the belief that the conspirators were expecting the arrival of a Prince of the Blood as a figure-head for the plot. There was absolutely no proof of the Duke's complicity. Cadoudal and twelve of his fellow-conspirators were next put on trial and executed; Pichegru was found strangled in prison,<sup>1</sup> while Moreau, whose complicity had been but faint-hearted, was pardoned and sent into exile.

The plots and alarms of the spring of 1804 gave Bonaparte the opportunity, for which he had long been looking, of assuming the title and functions of Emperor. The step was proposed in the Tribunate, and on 18 May, 1804 (28 Florial, An XII), an imperial Constitution was promulgated by decree of the Senate.<sup>2</sup> On 6 November it was confirmed by the votes of the people, and finally in December Pius VII himself came to Paris for the imperial coronation. But Napoleon, who was always ready to seize any opportunity of showing himself

<sup>1</sup> The balance of evidence points to his having committed suicide.

<sup>2</sup> The Constitution of An XII (Hélie, op. cit. pp. 717 *sqq.*) made Napoleon Bonaparte "Emperor of the French"; the office to be hereditary in his legitimate male heirs. In addition he was given power to adopt the sons and grandsons of his brothers; failing legitimate or adopted heirs male the Empire passed to his brothers Joseph and Louis and their heirs. Manhood suffrage was preserved and the various councils set up in the Constitution of the Year X were maintained, but with considerable modifications. The Tribunate was forbidden to discuss legislation in public and became a purely honorary body. The Legislative Body, on the other hand, was given the power of discussion, but with closed doors, except on the initiative of the Government. The powers of the Senate were considerably increased. It could advise the rejection of certain classes of legislation, in which case the Emperor was obliged to take the advice of his Council. But the Emperor could create an unlimited number of senators, so that he had a definite hold over that body. The *Conseil d'État* was maintained, and a new council was set up which afterwards became the Privy Council and included the grand dignitaries of the Empire—six in number. Two senatorial committees were appointed with somewhat illusory powers to guard liberty of persons and liberty of the Press. In addition to the six grand dignitaries fourteen Marshals of France were created to give military lustre to the court of the new potentate. A civil list of 25,000,000 was afterwards voted.

superior to all existing powers, actually placed the imperial Crown on his own head and proceeded himself to crown his wife, Josephine (to whom he had been canonically married on the evening before the ceremony). He was in fact ready enough to make the Pope his tool but not his master. He even made an effort to retain Pius VII in France, while the Pope attempted to exact a promise from the new Sovereign that he would restore the lands of which he had deprived the Holy See. Neither effort was successful, and about the only tangible result of the papal visit was the restoration of the Gregorian Calendar.

The foundation of an empire hereditary in the family of Bonaparte demands something more than passing comment. It was evidence in the first place not so much of Bonaparte's popularity—he was probably feared more than loved—as of the fact that he was indispensable. It was by his remedial legislation, even more than by his military successes, that he had brought France to regard him as a guarantee of stability. His boldness in grappling with the baffling problems which were the legacy of the Revolution; his readiness to bury the evidences of past strife; and at the same time his refusal to ignore the substantial work of the revolutionary period, forced men of all shades of moderate opinion to look to him as their protector: his refusal to identify himself with any party, and his willingness to employ men of all parties (as ministers, in the *conseil d'état*, and in the new departmental offices), rallied the majority of Frenchmen to him and forced them to the acceptance of the imperial constitution, not in a blind spirit of adulation, but as the best guarantee against reaction either one way or the other, and as a pledge that the results of the Revolution would on the one hand not be thrown away, and on the other be purged from the dross with which they had been so deeply alloyed.

Amidst these remarkable political changes there is a danger of forgetting that France and England had been in a state of war for more than eighteen months. Both states were seeking for some means of taking the offensive. On the French side Mortier, as we know, had invaded Hanover (May, 1803) and closed the Elbe and Weser, while St. Cyr

had invaded Naples. The Batavian and Helvetic Republics had been forced to support France, while Spain and Portugal had also been more or less swept into the net. On the English side the seizure of the French and Dutch colonies seemed to have brought the Addington Cabinet to the end of its resources. Pitt's return to office (April, 1804) witnessed a revival of activity; steps were taken to hasten the formation of the coalition, and England prepared to make a move in the Mediterranean. With a fleet and a small army it is difficult for an island power to injure a non-colonial continental power whose military forces are superior. And if this is so it is even more difficult for a military and continental power to injure a maritime and island power whose interests on the continent are slight. There were three ways in which Napoleon might hope to effect the downfall of England: by an attack on her colonies and India; by a commercial warfare and the closing of the Continent to her trade; finally by a direct invasion and the seizure of her capital. It was to the last of these expedients that Napoleon now directed his energies. There were two essential conditions on which the success of such a plan depended. France must be safe from any continental diversion; and she must, temporarily at least, be safe from the interference of the British navy. The first of these conditions was political, and Napoleon's political dexterity was adequate to secure it; the continent was actually hypnotized, and the formation of the coalition postponed, until 1805, and even then its formation was incomplete. In the process of securing the second condition Napoleon's genius came into contact with forces which he never wholly understood; and the most important of these forces was the British navy.

It is at this juncture that the weak side of Napoleon's character becomes apparent: his readiness to play for high stakes with the odds against him, his belief in his "star"; these could under certain conditions, as we know, be sources of strength; under other conditions, as now, they were sources of weakness. His power of self-deception and his arrogant assumption of the necessary intellectual, and even of the necessary material, inferiority of his enemies; these weak-

nesses grew as Napoleon climbed into dizzier and dizzier positions. And all were brought into relief in the great duel with England. The dazzling military successes of 1805 and 1806, which followed the prolonged paralysis of French arms and covered the destruction of the French navy, must not blind us to the fact that Napoleon in the end failed to secure the object for which he had declared war; that his true goal—the destruction of England—remained as remote in 1806 as it was in 1803, and that behind the ruins of Austria and Prussia there still loomed, after Austerlitz, Jena, and Tilsit, the might of England inaccessible and imperturbable as ever.

Napoleon's first step in the "immense project" which he had set before himself was to concentrate a powerful force on the English Channel and to prepare a flotilla for its transport to the shores of Kent. Of this force (*l'armée des côtes de l'océan* as it was called) recent critics have maintained that it was by no means the terrible engine that Napoleon pretended. It is true that it probably never reached a total of 100,000 men, but as to its quality we have only to remember that it formed the nucleus of the *grande armée* with which Napoleon swept the continent and which was the most efficient military engine that Europe had ever seen.<sup>1</sup> The risks which Napoleon was prepared to take in shipping his force in transports so slender as the flat-bottom boats of the flotilla, and attacking England, all prepared as she was, with any army that could have been transported across the Channel were indeed grave; he recognized this himself, and described the undertaking as "the most hazardous to which he had ever committed himself". But it is not unreasonable to assume that his military genius would have been equal to the task provided that the necessary condition, the neutralization of the British fleet, could have been secured.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> It must not be forgotten that in the Boulogne camp Napoleon had the most perfect training ground for his troops. It was there that they became familiar with the tactics which won Austerlitz, Jena, and Friedland.

<sup>2</sup> It would be rash to assume as Corbett (following Desbrière) has assumed that Napoleon only intended to use the 90,000 men of the *armée des côtes* for the projected invasion. With the wing *corps* and the reserve formations he could draw on some 180,000 men (see Alombert and Colin, "Campagne de 1805," II. 168).

At first, and so long as Napoleon was without allies, the hope of securing even the most temporary maritime superiority was practically hopeless. Nothing could be clearer than that France had not a naval superiority over Great Britain. The adhesion of Spain in 1804 reduced the odds in favour of Great Britain to seventy-five against sixty-four, calculated in ships of the line alone. But such odds cannot be finally estimated by a purely numerical calculation. Then as now the calibre of the ships and the weight of their broadsides entered directly into such calculations. Britain had a considerable superiority in three-deckers (as we should say now in "Dreadnoughts") and the best naval opinion of the day reckoned one three-decker as equal to two seventy-fours. Moreover, the English had an advantage in armament which caused Napoleon—a skilled artilleryman—the gravest anxiety. Most important of all, she had, by her great naval traditions and her constant familiarity with the sea, established a standard of seamanship which pervaded the navy from the Admiralty itself to the smallest frigate, and which made her stand to her rivals almost as a professional to amateurs. The more careful the study of the naval campaign of 1804-5, the more it becomes apparent that scarcely a blunder was made by the English leaders and that every movement was carried out with a combination of daring and judgment which could only have sprung from a tried professional knowledge and a deep-seated sense of responsibility.

The maritime position in the spring of 1805 was as follows: The largest French squadron was at Brest under Ganteaume and comprised twenty-one of the line; it was watched, though not completely blockaded, from Ushant by Cornwallis, with a force which varied considerably but which was not supposed ever to be less than eighteen of the line. Cornwallis' main function was the protection of the mouth of the Channel. At Ferrol-Corunna lay Gourdon with a joint squadron of French and Spaniards numbering fifteen of the line; he was blockaded by Calder. At Cadiz was Gravina with the bulk of the Spanish fleet, about fifteen of the line but in various degrees of un-

readiness. In Rochefort there was a small squadron of five of the line under Missiessy, while Villeneuve, with eleven of the line, was loosely blockaded at Toulon by Nelson, to whom had been entrusted the defence of the Mediterranean. The English plan of campaign had a double object, offensive and defensive: the offensive part of it provided for the introduction of a small force into Naples by way of Malta, while the key of the defensive position was a concentration of the various details at any time of crisis on Cornwallis at the mouth of the Channel.

Napoleon, after a good deal of hesitation, decided on an attempt to concentrate his fleets at Martinique, where the French possessed a considerable arsenal. Missiessy had already sailed thither in January, 1805; the other admirals received urgent orders to follow suit. Ganteaume at Brest was never able to execute them, without risking a pitched battle, which Napoleon forbade, and thus the play had to be played without Hamlet, the Brest squadron being completely paralysed. Villeneuve with his Toulon squadron did better. After one false start he got clean away through the Straits of Gibraltar while Nelson was performing his task of protecting Italian waters. Joined by the Spanish contingent at Cadiz (9 April), Villeneuve proceeded straight to the West Indies, while the British fleets, in accordance with the defensive plans, were closing in on Ushant. Nelson, having searched the Mediterranean, proceeded to Gibraltar (6 May), where he received news which satisfied him that the combined fleet had gone to the West Indies and that consequently the Channel was in no danger. He immediately started in pursuit (11 May), gained ten days on the enemy in the chase, and would have brought them to action in the West Indies had he not been drawn off on a false scent. On 8 June, Villeneuve, finding that Missiessy, whose instructions to wait for reinforcements had never reached him, had returned home, and that there was no sign of any of the other fleets, started on his homeward voyage; but for the Bay of Biscay not for the Straits, whither (on 13 June) Nelson started in pursuit. The moment of the return of Villeneuve was the crisis of the

naval campaign. What were his intentions? Where would he strike? So great was the danger and uncertainty that it became necessary to relax temporarily the blockade of Brest and wholly that of Rochefort. Ganteaume of the Brest squadron, however, missed his opportunity; he remained at anchor, and soon the door was locked on him again.

Villeneuve was making for Ferrol in the hope of releasing Gourdon. Calder had been reinforced and had drawn out to sea to receive him. The fleets met on 22 July, the combined fleet being slightly superior in numbers but probably slightly inferior if allowance is made for the relative values of the ships. A blind action was fought in a fog with a result slightly in favour of Calder, who, however, declined to renew the battle on the ensuing day. He had one eye always on the Ferrol squadron, whose appearance would have placed him in a very grave position. Villeneuve withdrew to Vigo and on 1 August managed to slip into Corunna and so effect the junction with the Ferrol squadron. The combined fleet now comprised twenty-nine of the line, but Ganteaume was still isolated and Nelson and Calder had concentrated on Cornwallis at Ushant, bringing the strength of the British fleet there to thirty-six of the line: the mastery of the Channel was as far off as ever. Napoleon sent furious messages from Boulogne reproaching his admirals with cowardice and stupidity. In spite of this, when Villeneuve left Ferrol on 13 August, it was for Cadiz and not for Brest and Ushant that he shaped his course. With his arrival in Cadiz the Channel crisis came to an end. The Boulogne expedition was hopeless. Nelson who had returned to England on 19 August was once more sent to sea and joined the blockading fleet off Cadiz on 28 September. Napoleon sent the most peremptory orders to Villeneuve to enter the Mediterranean and protect French interests there, but it was only news of the approach of the Admiral whom the Emperor was sending to replace him that forced him at last to weigh anchor, stand out of Cadiz, and confront the English fleet (20 October). Once the resolution to fight had been made both Villeneuve and his Spanish colleague Gravina, and indeed the whole of the combined fleet, behaved with unexpected deter-



mination and gallantry. Villeneuve had always taken a despondent view of the capacity of the force under his command: "I should be sorry to meet twenty of them (i.e. the enemy). Our naval tactics are antiquated. We know nothing but how to place ourselves in line and that is just what the enemy wants." At the supreme moment, however, his nerve returned; moreover his fleet gave the lie to these strictures. On Monday, 21 October, 1805, Nelson sighted the allied fleet to the eastward at daybreak, and immediately made signals for the execution of the plan of attack which had been prearranged and with which his subordinates were acquainted. This plan was that Collingwood with the lee division of fifteen ships should attack the twelve rearmost ships of the enemy simultaneously and put them out of action, while Nelson with the weather division prevented the enemy's van from interfering. For many years it was believed that this plan—the "Nelson touch" as it was called—was abandoned at the last moment in favour of a simultaneous attack on the enemy's centre by the two divisions in line ahead. This opinion has for some time been subject to keen criticism, and has at last been finally exploded by the report of the Committee appointed by the Admiralty to inquire into the tactics of Trafalgar. This Committee reported on 20 October, 1913, and their report establishes the fact that Nelson's original plan of attack was carried out in all its essentials. Collingwood brought his division (fifteen ships) into a line nearly parallel to the enemy's rear<sup>1</sup> and engaged them in the manner prescribed. Nelson with twelve ships stood on in line ahead, and made a feint to port against the allied van, thereby protecting Collingwood from molestation in the most effective possible way. He then bore up to starboard, passed down the enemy's line, and entered it astern of the flagship. The allied van slowly wore, but the battle was already decided and only five out of the ten or eleven ships had the courage to stand into the *mêlée*. Four

<sup>1</sup> Not quite parallel because the wind was light, the sailing powers of the ships varied, and Collingwood would not shorten sail to let the laggards get up, but more nearly parallel than has been sometimes thought, because the allied line was slightly convex.

of these five ships escaped, and stood for Rochefort, only to be forced to surrender, after a splendid resistance, by Sir R. Strachan off Cape Ortegal. Nelson's tactical skill in demobilizing the enemy's van decided the issue of the battle. Nine only of the thirty-three allied ships that had stood out of Cadiz returned there that evening, and of these three went ashore and were lost two days later in an attempt to rescue some of the prizes. Thus the combined fleet was practically annihilated. True the outbreak of a violent gale on the night after the battle somewhat marred the completeness of the British victory, and most of the prizes either sank of their own accord or had to be destroyed. In the end, of the nineteen captured ships only four were towed into Gibraltar. In spite of this the grand fact remains that the battle of Trafalgar set the question of maritime supremacy finally at rest. So far as Napoleon was concerned he had to "let that alone for ever".<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile, however, great events had been afoot upon the other element which threw into the shade the catastrophe of Trafalgar. It has been maintained by that school of historians which, hypnotized by Napoleon's genius, believes him to have been incapable of error that the descent upon England had never been seriously intended, and that the Boulogne preparations were a mere blind to conceal the Emperor's real intentions. Napoleon himself afterwards gave his authority to this theory; but the balance of the evidence is the other way. The truth seems that he only gradually realized the hopelessness of the projected descent, and that having realized it he determined to find employment for his army in Central Europe. He therefore embarked on a steady policy of "trailing his coat" in front of the weakest of the European powers—Austria. Already Russia was in almost open hostility to France, whose anti-English policy and desire for Eastern aggrandizement was received with grave resentment at St. Petersburg. A defensive alliance between Prussia and Russia had existed since 24 May, 1804, and since 6 November a similar alliance between Austria and Prussia. Napoleon administered his pin-pricks to Austria with vigour; but she was so weakened by the recent war and

<sup>1</sup> Villeneuve committed suicide rather than face the Emperor's anger.

so unprepared for a further struggle that it needed a good deal to provoke her. Provoked she must be, for Napoleon dared not offend public opinion by declaring war himself; and the goad was to hand in the shape of the crown of Lombardy. This crown Napoleon himself assumed on 20 May, 1805, and at the same time he incorporated Genoa with France, both acts being flagrant infractions of the Treaty of Lunéville.

Under these circumstances, and fearing even for Venice, Austria was obliged to protest and even to make warlike preparations. Napoleon adopted an attitude of injured innocence. "La route des préparatifs," he said, "c'est la route de la guerre"; but he himself began to make military preparations on the Rhine. As the summer advanced he became more threatening. "J'irai avec 200,000 hommes lui faire" (i.e. Austria) "une bonne visite dont elle se souviendra longtemps"; and again (of the Emperor) "il ne fera pas la fête de Noël à Vienne".<sup>1</sup> While this comedy was being played, the loose strands of the coalition (of which Austria was the final one) were weaving themselves into a web. In December England and Sweden had come to terms and on 11 April, 1805, Sweden and Russia signed an offensive alliance. Then at last on 7 July, 1805, Austria with great reluctance joined the coalition. This was the signal for Napoleon to move. With great secrecy and the help of a cunning diplomacy the steps were taken by which he stole a march of a fortnight on his enemies. The map of England, long half closed, was finally rolled up, and the compasses began to stride feverishly over that of Central Europe. Quietly the levers were moved and the great engine—not indeed without strain but with entire success—was reversed. The *Armée des Côtes de l'Océan* became on 29 August the *Grande Armée*, and almost before Austria realized that the camp on the Channel had been struck, the *Grande Armée* was at her throat.<sup>2</sup>

The story of the third coalition is a story of incompetency

<sup>1</sup> There was a prophetic touch here; it was on 26 December that the Treaty of Pressburg was signed.

<sup>2</sup> In the *Grande Armée* of 1805 the army corps becomes for the first time a recognized unit, it remained so (with modifications) till 1905. The army of 1805 was divided into seven army corps of from roughly 15,000 to 40,000 men each. Each corps comprised several divisions of infantry,

and want of harmony. Had Austria really waited for Russia as she intended to do, had Prussia refused the bait of Hanover and recognized France as the common enemy, there is no reason why the curb should not have been put on Napoleon in 1805 rather than in 1813. But it is useless to be wise after the event. Austria had not realized the kind of man she had to deal with, and became involved in a network of miscalculations. In the first place she sent her strongest army (94,000) and her best general, the Archduke Charles, to Italy, regarding it as impossible that Napoleon could appear with 150,000 men in Bavaria before the arrival of the Russians, who were already on the march to her assistance. Then General Mack, who was placed in the command of the Austrian army in Bavaria, pushed forward to the Iller with the intention of taking up a defensive cordon position until the arrival of the Russians. With the neutral state of Ansbach on his right flank he believed himself to be quite secure. Almost before Mack realized what was happening, Napoleon, ruthlessly violating the neutrality of Ansbach, swept round this flank, enveloped the Austrian army, and forced it to capitulate at Ulm (20 October).

This wonderful success was secured by a combination of foresight, rapidity, secrecy, and boldness. It was overwhelming both in its magnitude and in its dramatic suddenness. On 14 November, Napoleon was in the palace of Schönbrunn, his troops were in Vienna, and he had secured the bridges over the Danube. Triumphant as it was, however, his position was full

a strong force of cavalry, and a reserve artillery as well as divisional artillery.

The corps were as follows :—

(1) Bernadotte . . .	3 infantry divisions	1 cavalry division	18,000
(2) Marmont . . .	3 " "	1 " "	20,000
(3) Davout . . .	3 " "	1 cavalry brigade	27,000
(4) Soult . . .	4 " "	1 cavalry division	41,000
(5) Lannes . . .	2 " "	1 " "	18,000
(6) Ney . . .	3 " "	1 " "	24,000
(7) Augerau . . .	2 " "	1 " "	14,000
Add.; Murat . . .	cavalry reserve		22,000
Guard . . .			7,000

The figures are taken from Thoumas, "*Les transformations de l'Armée française*" (1887), I. 454-5.

of peril. The Russians had before this effected their junction with the remnant of the Austrian army and were advancing from the north-east. The Archduke Charles, who had defeated Masséna at Caldiero on 30 and 31 October, was hurrying back from Italy. Last but not least Prussia had been goaded into hostility by the violation of the Prussian State of Ansbach, a step which had been necessary to Napoleon's strategy in the campaign of Ulm, and which with his keen eye for essentials he had not scrupled to take. The corps of Bernadotte and Marmont, as well as the Bavarian contingent<sup>1</sup> from Bamberg (i.e. the entire left wing of the army which had taken Mack in rear), had passed through the neutral State. Stung by this high-handedness Prussia signed the Treaty of Potsdam with Russia on 3 November, binding herself, if Napoleon refused her mediation, to join the coalition within four weeks with 180,000 men. Prussia might have learnt from the campaign of Ulm what four weeks meant to a man of Napoleon's energy; but she was not just then in the mood to learn. Old Brunswick who commanded in chief thought that the mere mobilization of the Prussian army on his flank would check Napoleon's advance; in other words—disciple as he was of the "manceuvre" school—he hoped to get a result by strategy alone without the need for battle. He was soon to find out his mistake.

France was now confronted with a united Europe, only the union had not materialized. Napoleon's safety depended on whether he could strike down the units before the materialization was effected. Never was there greater need for rapidity, and not only for rapidity but for overwhelming success. The blow which Napoleon was now to strike must be swift, it must also be crushing. It proved to be both in the highest degree.

The Russian forces were now united and had been reinforced by an Austrian corps. Kutusov was in command but the Czar himself was present. The allies were full of confidence and believed themselves quite equal to the task of overthrowing Napoleon unaided; they had therefore little inclination to wait for Prussia, the only course which might

<sup>1</sup> The Bavarians (by treaty of 24 August) had agreed to furnish 20,000 men.

have succeeded. Napoleon, who had followed them northwards from Vienna into Moravia and was now at Brünn, encouraged them in their self-complacency, withdrew before their advance, sent envoys to the Czar, and displayed a well-feigned despondency before the Russian envoys who came to his camp.<sup>1</sup> It seems that he hardly expected to draw the Russians into an offensive. His army was scattered in a wide semi-circle from Brünn to south and south-east; and was only collected on the very eve of the battle by dint of great exertions, Friant's division making an amazing march to arrive in time. With profound genius the Emperor, having laid a moral trap for the allies, proceeded to lay a military trap for them. In the first place with great secrecy he shortened his communications, abandoning those which he had established with Vienna, and substituting a fresh and more direct line through Bohemia. Thus when the allies eventually attempted to envelop his right flank and throw themselves between him and Vienna they were simply threatening communications which no longer existed. Napoleon had made a careful study of the ground in front of Brünn, and saw that by occupying the plateau of the Pratzen he could secure himself from defeat and make sure of a modified success. This, however, would have been almost as fatal to him as defeat. He therefore deliberately abandoned this position and drew his army up in a concealed position on a long low ridge behind the Pratzen. His plan was to act defensively with his right, and tempt the allies to try and turn it in the hope of cutting him off from Vienna; in doing this he rightly anticipated that they would weaken their centre, upon which he prepared to fall with overwhelming forces. The trap was completely successful. The army of the allies was cut in two and its right and centre gradually driven back, while its left was held by the French right under Davout until its retreat was cut off. The allies lost more than 20,000 men and 180 guns and as a fighting force simply ceased to exist.

The Battle of Austerlitz was fought on 2 December. On the 26th the Treaty of Pressburg with Austria consolidated

<sup>1</sup> The situation is pictured with great spirit and accuracy in Tolstoi's famous novel.

its results.<sup>1</sup> Venice, Istria, Dalmatia, and Cattaro were added to the Napoleonic kingdom of Italy; the Tyrol was handed to Bavaria in reward for her help to France, Swabia to Würtemberg; Breisgau and Constance went to Baden (which became a Grand Duchy), while Austria received Würzburg. The Electors of Bavaria and Würtemberg were raised to royal rank. The Emperor Francis lost 3,000,000 subjects and one-sixth of his revenue. Simultaneously Napoleon was negotiating with Prussia. Austerlitz had been a severe shock to Frederick William's feelings, and Napoleon's bravado forced Haugwitz, the Prussian minister, to agree to the cession of Cleves to a Prince of the Empire (Murat), of Neufchâtel to France and of Ansbach to Bavaria, in exchange for Hanover and some concessions in the neighbourhood of Baireuth; and to an alliance offensive and defensive with France. So much for the darling Prussian policy of neutrality;<sup>2</sup> and the end was not yet (Treaty of Schönbrunn, or Vienna, 15 December, 1805). The treaty was subsequently modified to the further disadvantage of Prussia (15 February, 1806).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Ratified 1 January, 1806. Prussia would not ratify the treaty without modifications, *des "mais," des "si," des "car"* (Napoleon, "Correspondance," op. cit. xii. 45). Austria paid an indemnity of 40,000,000 francs. Talleyrand had remonstrated with Napoleon for his monstrous oppression of Austria. Napoleon was impelled towards peace with Austria by the financial crisis in France; he had been financed by the Ouvrard firm who also financed Spain and the declaration of war by Spain on England (October, 1804) gravely embarrassed this company.

<sup>2</sup> Hanover had been occupied by France in 1803, and this ought to have broken the neutrality of Prussia. See the remarkable instructions of Napoleon to Talleyrand, putting the screw on Prussia ("Correspondance," op. cit. xii. 4), in which occur the following characteristic words: "The terms of the note (to be presented to Haugwitz) must be severe and terse, but you may add *viva voce* all *adoucissements*, allusions which will make Haugwitz believe that it is my character that provokes this: that I am piqued over the form but that at bottom I have the same sentiments for Prussia".

<sup>3</sup> So early as 6 February, 1806, Napoleon wrote to Talleyrand: "We are menaced with the arrival of 200,000 Prussians, the Prussians are veritably mad. Let M. de Talleyrand tell M. de Haugwitz that this must be put a stop to once for all" ("Correspondance," op. cit. xii. 16):

and (7 February): "Let me know the number of troops the Prussians have in the direction of Ansbach. My intention is to occupy it the moment the Prussians enter Hanover" (*ibid.* xii. 18).

Napoleon now hastened to turn his victory over the coalition to account. His brother Joseph was made King of the Two Sicilies (March, 1806), his brother Louis King of Holland (24 May, 1806). Murat, who was married to Napoleon's sister Caroline, received the Grand Duchy of Berg, which included a portion of the Duchy of Cleves. Eugène Beauharnais, Napoleon's stepson, married the Princess Augusta of Bavaria; Berthier was made Prince of Neufchâtel. He was Napoleon's Chief of Staff and on him, for his great capacity for office-work and detail, more than on any other of his generals Napoleon depended. Titular duchies were created for other generals and ministers. More Counts and Barons of the Empire were created; for Napoleon recognized the necessity for binding his subordinates to the Empire and was fully alive to the human weakness for titles and dignities. Next he turned to the reconstruction of Germany, and at last the policy which Richelieu had originated seemed likely to be realized. The German states of Mainz, Bavaria, Würtemberg, Hesse Darmstadt, Berg, Nassau, and Baden renounced their adhesion to the Empire and, together with a number of smaller principalities, were formed into the "Confederation of the Rhine," which accepted the protectorship of Napoleon and entered into treaty relationships with France (19 July), each State providing a fixed number of troops, Bavaria 30,000, in all 63,000. This was the signal for the final break up of the Holy Roman Empire, and led to the resignation by Francis II of the imperial dignity in August, 1806.

Austria was now eliminated from the coalition, and for a moment it seemed possible that England also might be persuaded to sign another Treaty of Amiens. The English intervention in the Mediterranean had been greatly facilitated by the Battle of Trafalgar. English troops occupied Sicily and on 4 July, 1806, a small English force under Sir John Stuart defeated a French Division at Maida in Sicily; this victory was not followed up, and during the summer of 1806 active negotiations for peace were in progress between Fox's Government and the French Foreign Office, Napoleon offering to restore Hanover, abandon Sicily, and recognize the English in



Malta. Fox's death on 13 September rendered them unfruitful; but in no case is it likely that they would have succeeded.

Meanwhile the obstinate neutrality of Prussia was being broken down—deliberately it would seem—by the piling up of insults and humiliations. The subsequent military collapse of Prussia should not blind us to the fact that it required some courage to challenge her redoubtable army. In numbers and equipment, in form that is, though not in spirit, it remained the army of Frederick the Great; this was in fact its weakness, but it must have also seemed its strength. The Prussians themselves confidently believed that they possessed the first army in Europe and that its generals were a match for Napoleon.<sup>1</sup> The persistent neutrality of Prussia had not been in fact due to the impassiveness of her King or to any cowardice or fear of the results of war with France; it was the logical outcome of the policy she had long pursued. Prussia had steadily abjured the idea that she should intervene in the common cause of Europe; only under direct provocation would she fight and for her own hand. That direct provocation Napoleon now provided. The invasion of Hanover, the violation of the state of Ansbach, and the formation of the Confederation of the Rhine, which really made an end of Prussia's hegemony in North Germany, had not sufficed. The proposal to restore Hanover to England was an even deeper insult. The aggressive methods of the new Duke of Berg were a fresh source of irritation, and the final provocation was caused by the execution of a German bookseller named Palm who had circulated a pamphlet deploring the humiliation of Germany. Prussia was by this time genuinely moved. Cavalry officers proceeded to the French Embassy at Berlin and sharpened their swords on its steps.<sup>2</sup>

Napoleon was quite willing to accept the challenge. It is difficult to account for his provocative acts except by assuming that he wanted war with Prussia. No doubt his

<sup>1</sup> General Rüchel, for instance, said publicly—and probably believed what he said—that "His Majesty's Army could produce *several* generals equal to M. de Bonaparte!"

<sup>2</sup> Marbot, "Mémoires" (1891-2), I. 282.

keen military insight had shown him the real weakness of the imposing Prussian Army.<sup>1</sup> By this time, too, he was able to estimate at its true worth the fighting capacity of his own army. Now, when the Grand Army was at its highest pitch of efficiency and enthusiasm, and when its position in Southern Germany enabled it to strike at Berlin from the south, was certainly the moment to put the two systems—the new and the old—to the test.

It was probably with a view to war with Prussia that Napoleon, after the Peace of Pressburg, had retained the bulk of his troops in Germany. The pretext for this had been found in the refusal of Austria to cede the harbour of Cattaro, which Napoleon particularly required as a means of access to the Balkan peninsula and consequently a means of check-mating Russian policy in the East. The Austrians had allowed the Russians to occupy this place, and Napoleon's answer was a refusal to evacuate Austrian territory. All the autumn his troops were cantoned between Frankfort and the Inn, and reinforcements brought their strength to 170,000 men.<sup>2</sup> Napoleon was not going to allow Prussia, any more than he had allowed Austria, to steal a march on him. As early as 5 September<sup>3</sup> he had begun his preparations for the invasion of Prussia, and he himself was actually at Bamberg when he received the Prussian ultimatum on 7 October. His plan was simplicity itself—a direct thrust at Berlin with the object of drawing the Prussians into a decisive engagement at the earliest possible moment. The Prussians were nominally under the command of the old Duke of Brunswick, with whom

<sup>1</sup> On 12 October Napoleon wrote to Frederick William: "Your Majesty will be defeated. Europe knows that France has thrice the population of Your Majesty's States and is as completely organized as they are" (Seeley, "Stein," I. 251). This sounds more like common sense than bravado. The arm that Napoleon most feared of the Prussian troops was the cavalry. And though he may have suspected the weakness below the surface he was not justified in treating the army of Frederick the Great with disrespect.

<sup>2</sup> This figure includes a body of Bavarian auxiliaries.

<sup>3</sup> Foucart, "Campagne de Prusse (1806), d'après les archives de la guerre" (1887-90), I. 10.

were Rüchel and Hohenlohe; but the King was present in person and was referred to over Brunswick's head.<sup>1</sup> Even the King, however, did not act on his own judgment—he lacked the necessary confidence—and many questions were referred to a Council of War; but the decisions of the Council of War had no authority. The result was an extraordinary medley of counsels, no one of which was wholly adopted. Almost any plan would have been safer than this confusion of plans. The effect on the campaign was disastrous and bewildering. Napoleon has been reproached for not anticipating the movements of the Prussians, and it is often said that in this campaign he blundered into victory by the valour of his troops, the skill of his subordinates, and the weakness of his opponents; the truth is that the Prussians behaved with such extraordinary stupidity, that their movements were so contradictory, ill-concerted, and spasmodic, that no opposing general could have seen through them. At one moment it seemed that by the sheer absurdity of their combinations they might have snatched a victory from an opponent bewildered by their unaccountable behaviour; but Napoleon had laid his plans with a sufficient margin for safety and he won his victory, though not in the way he had contemplated.

At first the Prussians lay on the left bank of the Saale, the plan of falling on the French flank being for the moment uppermost. An advance guard was defeated at Schleiz and Saalfeld (10 October), Prince Louis Ferdinand falling in the latter action. The advice of Brunswick that the army should retire on the Elbe for the defence of the capital was then hesitatingly adopted. On the 13th the main body began its retreat, the head of the column reaching Auerstädt. On the same day Lannes came into touch with what he believed to be the main body at Jena. It was in fact only the rear-guard (53,000 men) under Hohenlohe. While Napoleon, on Lannes' information, believed that he was confronted with the entire Prussian army, Hohenlohe thought that he had to deal with no more than a single corps of the French, so that the mistake was common to both commanders. Napoleon's

<sup>1</sup> Scharnhorst was Chief of Staff; his plan for an offensive might have checked the French, but it was never given a chance.

advance had been organized with mathematical precision, so that every column, while sufficiently separated from the next for rapid marching, was every day in a situation that enabled it if necessary to co-operate for battle with the remaining columns ; he at once concentrated on his left for action.<sup>1</sup> Even so it was not till the close of the 14th that he was able to bring the bulk of his forces on to the field, and no part of his right wing was engaged at Jena, being, as a matter of fact, sufficiently engaged elsewhere. With great boldness Napoleon pushed his forces across the Saale in face of the Prussians and established himself on the heights beyond the river. Then he engaged the enemy and—aided by the reinforcements that were coming up all day—routed Hohenlohe, though only after stubborn fighting. Jena was in fact a continuous piling up of troops until the enemy was crushed. Napoleon fought at first with 54,000 men against Hohenlohe's 53,000 ; by the close of the day he had 78,000 men on the field.

Far on the right, meanwhile, Davout, who had been pushed forward to envelop the Prussians, had stumbled on to the main Prussian army under Brunswick at Auerstädt. Out-numbered by almost two to one, the gallant Marshal clung to his position and held it against every effort of the Prussians. Brunswick was mortally wounded and when, after five hours' fighting, the French began to advance, the nerve of the Prussian generals gave way and they decided to fall back on—Hohenlohe!<sup>2</sup> This was indeed reliance on a broken reed. The two columns met and one stream of rout swelled the other. Of all his campaigns that of Jena was perhaps the one to which Napoleon looked back with most satisfaction.<sup>3</sup> He had provided for all emergencies ; and moving with great rapidity, with his divisions sufficiently far apart to ensure speed, he had nevertheless been able to concentrate them for a battle

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon reckoned that he could concentrate on his centre in a day, on one of his flanks in two days.

<sup>2</sup> They had still two divisions more or less intact, while Davout's corps were practically all engaged.

<sup>3</sup> But at St. Helena he spoke of Austerlitz, and curiously enough Borodino (in which battle he was unwell), as his finest victories ; and of the campaign of Eggenmühl as superb.

at an unexpected time and place. He had, in fact, attained the highest pitch of flexibility. He could not foresee the blunders into which divided leadership plunged the Prussians. But his plans succeeded because he had allowed a sufficient margin for contingencies. His troops, moreover, had marched with splendid tenacity and his subordinates—in particular Lannes and Davout—had served him admirably.

After this double defeat there was no fight left in the Prussians and they collapsed with woeful rapidity. The army fell back on Magdeburg and Stettin. Napoleon kept hustling them north and east as he swept on to Berlin, marching by the chord of the arc while the Prussians were forced on to the arc itself. The dying Duke of Brunswick and the Prince of Orange were deprived of their territories, and the annexation of all Prussia east of the Elbe was announced. The Elector of Hesse Cassel was deposed, but the Saxons were offered neutrality if they would separate from the cause of Prussia. This they promptly did and Saxony was temporarily placed under French administration. On 11 December she joined the Confederation of the Rhine and agreed to furnish troops for the prosecution of the French campaign. The Elector was granted the title of King. Meanwhile, on 25 October, the French had entered Berlin and on the 28th Hohenlohe laid down his arms. Next day Stettin surrendered. Stettin and Hohenlohe were followed by Magdeburg and Blücher,<sup>1</sup> and the humiliation of Prussia was complete. Her military prestige, which had in reality long been a bubble, had been pricked with astounding rapidity.

Napoleon now established himself in Berlin, where one of his first acts was to issue the famous "Berlin Decree" (21 November, 1806), which forbade all trade in English and colonial goods, and excluded from the ports of France and of her allies ships that had touched at British ports. This step was the more effective in that Napoleon was now master of the Hanse towns. The Berlin Decree was only one item in a regular parry-and-thrust encounter, the result of which was

<sup>1</sup> Blücher's resolute fighting and retreat to Lübeck was the one redeeming feature of the campaign from the Prussian point of view. There was no adequate reason for Hohenlohe's surrender.

that eventually the greater part of Europe was closed to British goods. In itself it was an answer to the British Order in Council (16 May, 1806), which had declared a blockade of the coast from the Elbe to Brest. It was answered in turn by a second Order in Council (7 January, 1807) which forbade neutral trade with France. Napoleon retaliated with the Warsaw Decree (27 January, 1807), which ordered the seizure of British goods in the Hanse Towns. On 11 March, 1807, England went a step farther by declaring a blockade of the whole German coast. The Treaty of Tilsit was, as we shall see, to a great extent a mere extension and conclusion of the policy of fighting England by excluding her merchandise from the Continent.

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## CHAPTER XXXII

### NAPOLEON

(1806-1812)

IN the events of the years 1805-6 Napoleon's wonderful rapidity had enabled him to deal with his enemies one by one. He had isolated first Austria at Ulm, then Russia at Austerlitz, then Prussia at Jena, and in 1807 he was able once more to isolate Russia, for the help that Prussia could give in the campaign which was now to ensue counted for very little; the fighting force of Prussia had been reduced to a remnant. Frederick William III had retired to Königsberg with this remnant, and was there awaiting the intervention of the Czar. Napoleon had not indeed been unwilling to negotiate with Prussia; he had had the idea of reviving her with a centre of gravity farther East, of making her in fact a kind of Poland, a Slav power, and so a check on Russia; and he had made advances to Frederick William along these lines, only demanding that the latter should agree to guarantee the integrity of Turkey against Russia. Frederick William, however, rejected Napoleon's advances (November, 1806) and threw himself on the support of Russia. Prussia, for what she was worth (and that was certainly for the present very little) was thus irretrievably committed to antagonism to France. Far more important, at least from the Russian point of view, was the attitude of Austria; and for the moment Austria became the pivot of European diplomacy. To Russia it was all-important that she should be able to rely on a flank attack upon Napoleon delivered by Austria; nor was Napoleon oblivious to this danger; offers of Eastward aggrandizement were made by France to Austria; the restoration of Silesia was even suggested. But Austria was not to be moved. She was indeed more inclined to listen to the appeal of Russia,



but finally declined to take action ; if the worst came to the worst she would fight, but not till then : “ *Je me battrai le plus tard possible* ”. Russia meanwhile had taken the offensive against Turkey ; that power had been forced by the menaces of Napoleon to dispute the Russian protectorate of “ the Principalities ” (Moldavia and Wallachia), and had declared war in December, 1806. A Russian army threatened Bucharest, and Napoleon plastered Europe and Asia with his protests and paraded himself as the champion of Europe against the nefarious designs of Russia on Turkey. In reality he had encouraged a Russo-Turkish war in order to divide the Russian forces and also to promote dissension between Russia and Austria.

Meanwhile the French armies had advanced into Polish Prussia and had established themselves on the Vistula (November-December, 1806). The Poles had at once hailed Napoleon as liberator, and he took every advantage of their enthusiasm, and even enlisted Polish regiments in his service. Poland, however, as he now quickly learnt, is a terrible country for campaigning ; it was there that the Emperor discovered “ a fifth element—mud ” ; this element indeed was the primary cause of a serious reverse to his arms on 26 December, 1806, when the condition of the roads so interfered with the French concentration that Lannes found himself outnumbered and was very severely checked by Bennigsen at Pultusk. On the same day Augereau suffered heavy loss at Golymin. Napoleon had attempted a great concentric attack against the Russian front and flank. But the superior mobility of the French had been neutralized by the extreme difficulty of movement in a country such as Poland, and the result had been two disconnected fights, both desperate and bloody, and neither of them favourable to the French. This decided the Emperor to go into winter quarters and to secure his communications on the Vistula by the capture of Dantzic. The French armies cantoned along that river from Warsaw almost to its mouth, but Dantzic held out and did not surrender until May, 1807.

In January of that year Ney, who was posted on the left

of the French line, made an unauthorized and characteristically reckless forward movement, threatened Königsberg, and obliged Frederick William to withdraw to Memel on the very confines of his kingdom. The Russians concentrated to fall upon Ney, crossed the Alle, and began to hustle the French left. Napoleon saw his opportunity. He instructed Ney and Bernadotte to fall back before the Russians and draw them on. His plan—a very ingenious one—was to take advantage of the curve of the Vistula which placed his right farther forward than his left, in order to spring upon the Russian left and rear. It was one of his cleverest military inspirations, but unfortunately his dispatches to Bernadotte fell into the hands of the Cossacks. Bennigsen, made aware of Napoleon's plans, stopped the pursuit of Ney, and retreated north-east to get out of the Emperor's grip. The French, aided by a hard frost, followed close at his heels, and Bennigsen only just eluded the blow. He retired hard pressed to Prussian-Eylau, where a sanguinary rear-guard action took place on the evening of 7 February. The Russian army, exhausted by want of food, was straggling badly, and, fearing that it might break up altogether, Bennigsen faced about on some low ridges east of Eylau and offered battle. Napoleon had not expected this, and neither Ney on the left nor Davout on the right was available for immediate action. With the 50,000 men at his disposal he therefore determined to hold the Russians until the arrival of Davout, when he proposed to attack the enemy's left and left-centre. Bennigsen, with 80,000 men, awaited the attack in the passive Russian fashion. Heavy storms of snow obscured the view; the lakes amidst which the battle was fought were hard frozen so that cavalry could manœuvre on them. The battle began with a furious artillery duel from which the Russians, drawn up on an exposed hill-side, suffered terribly, while the French, concealed in folds of the ground, suffered less. Napoleon seems to have intended to attack the Russian left-centre with his cavalry and the corps of Augereau while Davout assaulted the left, and Soult (to be supported later by Ney) held the remainder of their line, the guard being in reserve. For some

reason Augereau attacked too soon and in too heavy columns, lost direction, was overwhelmed by artillery fire, and his corps practically annihilated.<sup>1</sup> With admirable nerve and promptitude Napoleon ordered Murat to repair the disaster and check any offensive designs of Bennigsen by a grand cavalry charge. This movement, though its effect was transitory, was largely successful, and considerably facilitated the flank attack of Davout which was just beginning to develop. Vigorously pressed by the Marshal, the Russian left was turned and forced back until nearly half their line was rolled up. At this juncture a portion of Lestocq's Prussian corps—the only field force remaining to Prussia—which had evaded Ney was led into action by Scharnhorst. It marched along the rear of the Russian army and fell upon Davout, who was in turn driven back. Ney's arrival on the French left late in the afternoon was not sufficient to turn the battle in their favour, and Napoleon's position at nightfall was so critical that he ordered preparations for a retreat. He had lost from 25,000 to 30,000 men, and the remainder were so utterly exhausted and depressed as to be unfit for further effort.<sup>2</sup> Luckily, Bennigsen's nerve was not equal to the strain. His losses had probably exceeded those of Napoleon, and in spite of the protests of Scharnhorst he abandoned the field and retired on Königsberg. Napoleon was thus able to claim as a victory a battle which had actually been drawn slightly in favour of his opponents. In point of fact he was greatly shaken. The murderous losses, and the discovery that he had to face an enemy whom in order to defeat it was necessary to destroy, combined with the threatening political situation, the failure of the Turkish intervention, and the continued resistance of Dantzic on his flank, to alarm him for the future. His activity during the ensuing pause in hostilities was marvellous. The army was rapidly reinforced and reorganized, and great efforts were made to stir Turkey and even Persia into activity. Fresh overtures were also made to Prussia; but Hardenberg, the Prussian minister, whose courage under adversity cannot

<sup>1</sup> It was broken up after the battle, having lost about 50 per cent.

<sup>2</sup> Vandal, A., "Napoléon et Alexandre I" (1891), i. 31.

be too warmly recognized, remained firm, and on 26 April, 1807, Prussia entered into a new engagement with Russia—the Treaty of Bartenstein, by which it was agreed that neither should make an independent peace; that Turkish integrity should be guaranteed; that Prussia should recover her old territory with certain additions; that the Confederation of the Rhine should be dissolved, while Austria should recover the Tyrol and the line of the Mincio. In other words, Ulm, Jena, and Austerlitz were to be “written off”. Rebuffed by Prussia Napoleon had turned to Austria; Stadion refused to intervene but offered to mediate, and for a moment there was talk of a European Congress at Copenhagen. But the Treaty of Bartenstein, to which England adhered, ruined this plan. A change of ministry in England had brought Castlereagh and Canning into office (26 March), and they ratified the treaty and offered a subsidy of £1,000,000 to Prussia. England’s intervention, however, was too late to exercise a serious influence on the campaign which now ensued, and the expedition which, under Cathcart, was dispatched to the Island of Rügen had no effect on the war or the treaty that ended it.

Napoleon, to whose agile brain no combination seemed impossible, had already conceived the idea of an alliance with Russia. He recognized that he could not make permanent head against all Europe. Rebuffed on every other side, logic was driving him into the arms of Russia; but logic also told him that the surest means of securing the Russian alliance was a demonstration of his military superiority. He saw the danger of a new coalition should Austria accede to the Treaty of Bartenstein, and before this adherence had had time to take place he struck his blow, as well-timed as it was crushing. By June he had secured an immense numerical superiority over his opponents, partly by drawing on Saxony and Bavaria and the introduction of foreigners into French service.<sup>1</sup> The numbers were now 210,000 to 130,000; but this result had only been gained by a considerable lowering of the

<sup>1</sup> There were about 30,000 foreigners in the army: 11,000 Poles, 10,000 Bavarians, 6000 Saxons, 3000 other Germans and Dutch (Lettow-Vorbeck, “Der Krieg von 1806 und 1807,” 1892-9).

standard of the recruits. Already the Grand Army was not what it had been in 1805.

In June Bennigsen began to move. He made an attempt to cut off Ney's corps which had been pushed forward as far as Guttstadt. Napoleon at once took the offensive and attacked a part of the Russian army in the strongly fortified position of Heilsberg. The result was a bloody repulse for the French. Napoleon, however, turned the position on the next day and moved by Prussian-Eylau on Königsberg, thus manœuvring to get between that town and Bennigsen, who retreated down the Alle. Holding the mass of his troops at Eylau, Napoleon next detached Davout and Soult towards Königsberg, while Lannes moved upon Friedland on his right. Bennigsen, finding Lannes at Friedland, crossed the Alle to attack him while isolated. With admirable skill and determination Lannes maintained the action while Napoleon hurried to his assistance. By the time the French army was on the field, the whole of the Russians had crossed the Alle and were in line with their backs to the river. Napoleon at once determined to crush their left, seize Friedland, and cut off their right and centre. In this he was completely successful. The Russian left was nearly destroyed; the bulk of their right and centre escaped by fords after suffering heavy losses. The victory was crushing and comparatively cheap. The Russians, who had fought with characteristic stubbornness, lost 30,000 men and were left reeling from their frightful experience. Bennigsen's nerve gave way and he implored his master to "stop the butchery". Alexander, always impressionable, was horrified at the loss of life and promptly agreed to an armistice. By a complete revulsion of feeling he now became hotly intent on an alliance with his conqueror.

Napoleon received Alexander's advances with open arms, addressing Russia more as a "wayward friend" than as an enemy, for he saw in a Franco-Russian alliance the germ of a fresh scheme for the conquest of Great Britain. He had by this time recognized that an alliance was necessary to him. Prussia stood aside in sulky defiance, refusing the friendship of a conqueror from whom she had suffered such terrible

humiliations; Austria had rejected his overtures; Russia alone remained, and a Russian alliance was especially attractive to Napoleon, because Russia could, he thought, be satisfied with south-eastward aggrandizement at the expense of Turkey, and could in this way be prevented from having too great weight in the politics of Western Europe, while she might give the most powerful assistance to the invasion of Asia, the attack upon India, and the seizure of Egypt, projects which had never ceased to float in his brain. Above all alliance with Russia would complete the "Continental System" by which Napoleon hoped to ruin England.

As for Russia, she was reluctant to desert her ally in her extremity; but her first instinct was to secure a cessation of hostilities. The lure of Eastern aggrandizement, of a partition of Turkey, of a great gain, that is to say, after an unsuccessful war, was almost irresistible. Moreover, Alexander was overcome with a personal curiosity to see Napoleon, was fascinated even before he saw him by his intellectual greatness, and anxious to identify the fortunes of Russia with those of a man whom he now reckoned invincible. On the Czar's suggestion a meeting between the Emperors was arranged and took place on a raft moored on the River Niemen at Tilsit (25 June). A close intimacy at once began, and the two Emperors spent a fortnight together deriving much pleasure from each other's society.

Few incidents in modern history have more of human interest than this meeting of East and West. The vastness of the issues at stake, the striking contrast between the characters of the imperial negotiators, the fascination exercised by the one and experienced by the other, the presence of the clumsy and morose King of Prussia, all serve to make the interview of Tilsit one of the most picturesque incidents in modern history. Alexander was captivated by the grandeur of Napoleon's ideas, the brilliance of his dialectics, and the wide range of his intellect, as well as by that strange personal magnetism with which he was endowed. Napoleon, on the other hand, whose experience of the monarchs of Europe had not hitherto been encouraging, was not unsusceptible to the

subtle, almost feminine, charm of his youthful guest.<sup>1</sup> A real intimacy sprang up; the two monarchs contrived to shake off the King of Prussia as often as they could, galloped over the surrounding country, reviewed the troops, and conversed *tête-à-tête* far into the night. The result was the Treaty of Tilsit, which in reality comprised three treaties: first, the formal treaty of peace; secondly, a supplementary secret treaty; thirdly, a treaty of offensive and defensive alliance. The most important clauses in the formal treaty were those which, in deference to Alexander's representations, restored to Prussia the central part of her territories, the province of Silesia, and the old Prussian territories from the Elbe to the Niemen, but created out of Polish Prussia a Grand Duchy of Warsaw for the King of Saxony, and from the Prussian territories west of the Elbe, together with Brunswick and Hesse Cassel, a kingdom of Westphalia for Napoleon's brother Jérôme, while Cottbus was assigned to Frederick Augustus I of Saxony. Prussia surrendered Jever (in East Frisia) to Holland; Russia recognized Jérôme in Westphalia, Joseph in Naples,<sup>2</sup> and Louis in Holland, and accepted the Confederation of the Rhine. Dantzic was made a free city under the protection of Prussia and Saxony,<sup>3</sup> and free navigation of the Vistula was established; the frontier between Russia and Poland was modified in favour of Russia; the Dukes of Saxe-Coburg, Mecklenburg-Schwerin, and Oldenburg were restored, but the seaports of the two latter were to remain in French occupation until the ratification of peace between France and England. Napoleon accepted Alexander's mediation between France and England, while Alexander accepted Napoleon's between Russia and Turkey. Meanwhile Russia was to evacuate Moldavia and Wallachia, and hostilities between Russia and Turkey were to cease. The secret articles of the treaty provided that Cattaro

<sup>1</sup> "I have just met the Emperor Alexander," he wrote to Josephine, "he is an extremely handsome, worthy, and youthful Emperor; he is much cleverer than is commonly supposed."

<sup>2</sup> Also in Sicily when compensation could be found for the King of Sicily.

<sup>3</sup> But the maintenance of a French garrison there made it temporarily a French fortress.

and the seven Ionian Islands should be surrendered to France, that Alexander should recognize Joseph Bonaparte in Sicily as soon as Ferdinand was compensated either by the Balearic Islands or Candia; that, if Hanover were ultimately united to Westphalia,<sup>1</sup> Prussia should be indemnified by the recovery of some portion of her lost territories west of the River Elbe.

The Treaty of Alliance,<sup>2</sup> which was also secret, committed the high contracting parties to a mutual offensive and defensive alliance against all comers. Each was to support the other if necessary with all available forces, and neither was to make peace independently. If England had not accepted Russian mediation before 1 November, on the basis of equal recognition of all flags at sea and restitution of all conquests subsequent to 1805, Russia was to notify her that she would make common cause with France, and, on 1 December, the Russian ambassador was to be withdrawn from St. James': Copenhagen, Stockholm, and Lisbon would then be summoned to declare war on England and to close their ports to English merchandise. In the event of Sweden's refusal, Denmark was to be compelled to make war on her. Joint pressure was to be brought to bear on Vienna to persuade Austria to accept the Continental System. In the event of England's making peace, she was to recover Hanover as the price of her colonial conquests. On the other hand if Turkey refused French mediation, the high contracting parties would combine to partition her; Roumelia and Constantinople, however, were excluded from the partition. A treaty was also signed between France and Prussia (9 July) by which Prussia agreed to co-operate against England and recognized Napoleon's creations. On 29 July, by a Convention signed at Königsberg,<sup>3</sup> the terms

<sup>1</sup> Hanover had been occupied in 1803, partly incorporated in Westphalia in 1806, and only fully incorporated in 1810.

<sup>2</sup> The text of this treaty is printed in Fournier, *op. cit.* i. 561.

<sup>3</sup> The Convention of Königsberg arranged for the withdrawal of the French troops from what remained of Prussia before 1 October (with some exceptions) but only on condition that the outstanding indemnities due to France were paid; the amount of the indemnity was not fixed till long afterwards, and, as Prussia was in no position to pay, the Convention really involved the continued occupation of Prussia.



of the evacuation of Prussia were arranged and Napoleon became "the remorseless creditor of a poverty-stricken state".

The Treaties of Tilsit register the high-water mark of Napoleon's power; they are a recognition that he could go no farther single-handed in his struggle with England.<sup>1</sup> In order to accomplish his purpose he was willing to share the leadership of Europe with Russia, and to accomplish with the assistance of that power what he could not do alone. To effect this combination he had not scrupled shamelessly to abandon his Turkish ally, whereas Alexander, to save himself from further military disasters and in the hope of securing great accessions of territory in the East, had been persuaded to abandon with equal shamelessness his ally and protégé Prussia and see her reduced to the position of a second-rate power, and also to inflict grave economic injury on his own empire by the rupture of relations with England.

Europe was now at Napoleon's feet, but she had been partly taken by surprise, while partly she had thrown up the sponge. Napoleon had proved that he could knock the powers down one by one; but he had not proved that he could deal with a coalition which should act together. To crush England was still his great object; and it had now to be seen whether the alliance with Russia would give him that superiority to secure which alone he had consented to come to terms with a defeated enemy. Fortunately for England the moment when Napoleon received this great reinforcement had coincided with the advent to office of a more determined ministry. By this ministry the blows which Napoleon now contemplated were anticipated, those which he struck were parried with vigour. We have seen what were the blows he contemplated: Portugal, Denmark, Sweden were to be forcibly obliged to join the coalition. This would have meant an accession of forty ships of the line (of which twenty were Danish) to the enemies of England. By the terms of the treaty this combination could not be completed until December. But the English ministry was not aware of this, and quite naturally

<sup>1</sup> They are also a recognition that French public opinion was opposed to further bloodshed.

feared an immediate attack. Canning, in face of this risk, did not hesitate for a moment; acting with both intuition and courage he ordered an immediate attack on Copenhagen and the seizure of the Danish fleet. Admiral Gambier and General Cathcart were entrusted with the task. Copenhagen was bombarded and the twenty Danish ships, which had been destined to play an important part in the downfall of England, were towed away tamely into English ports (2-5 September, 1807).<sup>1</sup> Bitterly wounded by this brutal treatment Denmark threw herself into Napoleon's arms, where without her ships she was scarcely welcome. Sweden surrendered Pomerania, and was placed in the awkward position of having to meet a Russian invasion of Finland single-handed. With the capture of the Danish fleet half the reason for the Treaties of Tilsit had vanished.

Napoleon, who had been thrown into transports of rage by the news, tried to turn the event to profit by hurrying on the coalition against England. Denmark was already committed; Sweden was occupied; there remained Portugal and Austria. An ultimatum was now dispatched to Lisbon, demanding the exclusion of British ships from Portuguese waters by 1 September, 1807, and overtures were at the same time made to Spain to secure her co-operation in the event of a Portuguese refusal. By the end of September Napoleon had resolved on the partition of Portugal. Spain was drawn into the plan by the offer to Godoy, the notorious favourite and minister of the Spanish Court, of a share in the spoil, and a Convention between France and Spain was signed at Fontainebleau on 27 October. Marshal Junot, with 20,000 troops, indeed, was already in Spain and was advancing on the Portuguese frontier, which he crossed on 18 October, under orders from the Emperor to be in Lisbon before 1 December. Napoleon hoped to seize the British merchandise and shipping at Lisbon and to secure the Portuguese fleet either by force or treaty. It fell to Sir Sidney Smith—the very man who had thwarted Bonaparte at Acre—to thwart Napoleon at Lisbon. Under his escort, and acting on his advice, the Portuguese royal family set sail for

<sup>1</sup> Eighteen ships-of-the-line were actually carried off.

Brazil on 27 November, and with them disappeared all the English and Portuguese ships round which the Emperor had hoped to throw his net. The surrender of Lisbon to Junot (30 November) was thus bereft of its profit and importance. For the second time within the space of two months Napoleon had been foiled by England.

Meanwhile the results of the Treaty of Tilsit were beginning to make themselves felt, and on 7 November diplomatic relations between England and Russia were broken off. Already, however, difficulties had arisen between the allies. Alexander had been led to hope for a great extension of territory eastward, but Napoleon had purposely left the clauses about Turkey vague. He did not desire the break-up of that power; he had his eye on Egypt and feared that in the break-up England, with her command of the sea, would be able to forestall him in that quarter, whereas Turkey made an excellent warming-pan for France. So, when Alexander refused to evacuate the "Principalities" or ratify the armistice with Turkey, as he was by the treaty bound to do, Napoleon found himself in an awkward position. He was bound to give Russia some *quid pro quo*, but he now desired to do so not in the East but in the zone where Russia carried weight, i.e. in Central Europe.

Very tentatively, and knowing how averse Alexander would be to the further oppression of Prussia, he offered to make over the "Principalities" to Russia on condition that he might take Silesia. Napoleon was anxious to reduce Prussia to a condition in which she would no longer count as a European power; he refused to withdraw his troops<sup>1</sup> and was steadily bleeding her by financial oppression. The appropriation of Silesia would have completed her destruction. Alexander refused to sanction the transaction and continued to press for the cession of the "Principalities". The coalition was only kept together by the menacing attitude of England. In October it had been reinforced by the adhesion of Austria. The

<sup>1</sup> The maintenance of the French armies on German soil was partly in order to keep them out of France, to make them less national, and more attached to the Emperor's person: partly also to save cost.

Treaty of Fontainebleau (11 October, 1807) had settled the outstanding questions between that power and France entirely in favour of the latter, and in January Canning's refusal to accept Austrian mediation led to the withdrawal of the Austrian ambassador from St. James'. On 28 February, 1808, Austria gave her adherence to the Continental System. Prussia had already been forced to withdraw her ambassador from England on 29 November, 1807.

Napoleon was now intent on a great oriental expedition, which was to comprise the partition of Turkey (to which step he now reconciled himself) and was to culminate in the invasion of India. On 2 February, 1808, in a letter to Alexander, he proposed his scheme, and while advising him to indemnify himself at the expense of Sweden—which power had continued to adhere to England—hinted at his willingness to agree to a partition of Turkey. Alexander therefore sent an expedition against Sweden, thereby weakening himself in Turkey, which was exactly what Napoleon wished.

The first and most important condition for the success of Napoleon's grandiose scheme was that France should dominate the Mediterranean. No doubt he had had this in mind when he included the surrender to France of Cattaro and the Ionian Islands and the acquisition of Sicily by his brother Joseph among the terms of the Treaty of Tilsit. The Emperor spent part of the winter of 1807-8 in Italy, where he added Parma, Piacenza, and Etruria to the kingdom of Italy, made Tuscany, Piedmont, Corsica, and Elba into three French departments (30 May, 1808), and annexed the more important part of the Papal States (including the capital) to the French Empire (April, 1808). Italy was thus well on the road to complete dependence upon France, and Napoleon was free to turn to Spain. He had not forgotten that Spain had shown hostility to him before Jena, and he had long regarded the substitution of the Bonapartes for the Bourbons in Spain as a mere question of time and opportunity. The negotiations which had preceded the invasion of Portugal<sup>1</sup> had been a preliminary to that step. The domination of Spain was now

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 156.

doubly necessary as part of the scheme for crushing England in the East.

Napoleon set to work with unblushing duplicity, and with that cynical disregard for moral obligations which was characteristic of him. To understand the situation it is necessary to look back at the course of political affairs in Spain. The King and Queen of Spain, Charles IV and Maria Louisa of Parma, were craven and incapable, and had long been dragged at the chariot wheels of their corrupt and degraded favourite Godoy (the "Prince of the Peace"); the heir-apparent Ferdinand was in reality little better than his parents, but on him, such as he was, the hopes of Spain centred. Thus it was that, when in October, 1807, Charles IV arrested his son on a charge of conspiring against Godoy, there was considerable popular ferment, with the result that the prince was released. This scandal, and the degradation of the royal house of Spain, gave Napoleon his opportunity. Troops were concentrated at Bayonne, ostensibly for the invasion of Portugal, and on 22 November, 1807, Dupont crossed the Bidassoa in the face of treaty obligations. In January a third army corps invaded the Peninsula, and at the same time troops were advanced into Catalonia. In February Napoleon threw off the mask, and Spanish fortresses (including Pampeluna and Barcelona) were treacherously seized. By March there were 100,000 French troops in the Peninsula. The cowardly behaviour of the King, Queen, and Godoy, who fled from Madrid, now provoked an insurrection, and Charles IV was forced to abdicate in favour of his son (18 March, 1808). Ferdinand proved himself almost as great an abject as his parents—grovelled to Murat, who had been sent to Madrid, and made advances to Napoleon.

Charles IV now protested that his abdication had been forced from him. Napoleon had him sent to Bayonne; and in April succeeded in enticing Ferdinand to the same place. Confronted with his parents and terrified by Napoleon's threats, Ferdinand resigned the crown in favour of his father, only to find that the latter had already signed a resignation in favour of Napoleon. By this infamous trickery Napoleon

secured the Spanish crown, which he at once handed to his brother Joseph. A packed Junta summoned by Murat, who had quelled an insurrection in Madrid after heavy street fighting, called Joseph to his throne. Joseph entered Madrid in July, whereupon the entire country broke into spontaneous rebellion. Everywhere the populace rose in unbounded fury against the French and the introducers of the French. Fire, massacre, and pillage devastated the country. There was no mistaking the sincerity of the insurrection.

To meet the national resistance, Napoleon had nearly 250,000 men in the Peninsula; of these some 28,000 good troops were with Junot in Portugal entirely cut off from the French army in Spain; another 14,000 under Duhesme were in Catalonia, while the main force under Dupont had pushed forward from the base Pampeluna-San Sebastian and occupied Madrid. The whole had been under the direction of Murat, but on his accession to the throne of Naples the command fell to Savary. Napoleon, who thoroughly despised the Spaniards and under-estimated their powers of resistance, had made the mistake of sending into the Peninsula raw and ill-disciplined troops, including a good many foreign levies, and this for the very task that demands the greatest steadiness—the dealing with guerillas and irregular fighting. He was now to pay the cost of his error of judgment. There was no definite concentration of the 100,000 Spanish troops against the French invasion, but in every direction there were hostile forces on foot. To meet these Napoleon ordered, in the first place, two expeditions from Madrid; Dupont advanced against Seville and Cadiz and Moncey against Valencia. Each found himself too weak for his appointed task. Moncey effected a retreat on Madrid, but Dupont, after unwisely dividing his forces, was cut off at Baylen and forced to capitulate with 18,000 men (14 July). This was an unprecedented disaster to French arms and opened Napoleon's eyes to the true state of affairs in Spain; it also roused all his enemies to a sense of his vulnerability, and led to combinations which will have to be noticed elsewhere. More directly it led to the immediate evacuation of Madrid, and largely discounted the

victory of Bessières over Blake at Medina de Rio Seco (14 July). Blake, with the Spanish army of Galicia, had threatened the French communications, but was completely defeated by an army about half the size of his own. This, however, was the solitary success which attended the French arms in the Peninsula. Palafox's marvellous defence of Saragossa (15 June to 13 August) proved the capacity of the Spaniards for barricade and street fighting as well as the obstinacy of their courage; Duhesme in Catalonia had his communications cut, failed twice to take Gerona, and was blockaded in Barcelona. It was in Portugal, however, where at first Junot seemed to be carrying all before him, that the most dangerous cloud arose. Here on 3 August a British force of 16,000 under Sir Arthur Wellesley landed at Mondego Bay, and it became clear that the British cabinet had rightly appreciated the value of the Peninsula, and had determined on intervention. Against these British troops and 2000 Portuguese Junot could only bring 13,000; with these he assaulted the strong British position at Vimiero (21 August) and was repulsed with great loss; Wellesley would have won a crushing victory had he not in the moment of success been superseded by Sir Harry Burrard, who in turn was next day superseded by Sir Hew Dalrymple. The consequence of these changes of command was the Convention of Cintra (30 August), by which Junot, who might have been forced to unconditional surrender, was allowed to evacuate Portugal. Marred as it was by these unfortunate misunderstandings, the British success had been a signal one, and the menace to Napoleon was even greater than the material loss he suffered.

The net result of the summer's operations in the Peninsula was that the French had been swept clean out of Portugal, and in Spain had been driven behind the Ebro. But the check to French arms was felt not only in the Peninsula; it had its effect on the politics of Europe. The Emperor Francis had been profoundly moved by Napoleon's treatment of the Spanish Bourbons; *proximus ardet Ucalegon* was his thought when he saw his cousin of Braganza an exile in Brazil and his cousin of Bourbon a prisoner in France. By

good fortune the house of Habsburg was served at this juncture by a statesman of real grasp and courage. Count Stadion, the foreign minister, saw that the only hope for his country lay, not in a meek alliance with Napoleon with a prospect of a trivial share in the foreshadowed partition of Turkey, but in a bold appeal to national feeling, a reconstruction of the military forces, and a reform and modernization of the administration. The decree of 9 June, 1808, for the raising of a national *landwehr* or militia, embodied the principle of national service, and was the first of those appeals to patriotism which extended afterwards—and with greater success—to Prussia and in the end brought about Napoleon's downfall. Stadion was the author of that decree, which received a great response from Austrian patriotism. Austria began to arm, and Napoleon, although he was confident that he could easily defeat her, realized that he might any day be confronted with another obstacle to his great designs. To avoid this he was ready to make almost any sacrifice. He prepared for a great effort in Spain; he brought all possible pressure to bear on the Czar to persuade him to restrain Austria and act as policeman of Europe while he dealt with the Spanish complication; finally, with the idea of propitiating Russia, but more still with the idea of releasing troops for the operations in Spain, he began the long-postponed evacuation of Prussia.

But the most important result of the French disasters in Spain was the stiffening effect they had on the Czar. Alexander, who was by this time weary of "asking provinces and receiving porcelain," realized that Napoleon's difficulties in Spain made the Russian alliance more important to him than ever, and therefore more worth paying for. He received an instalment of his reward in the evacuation of Prussia; but he required something more tangible and claimed with more firmness than before his promised reward in the East. Moreover, anxious though he was to keep Austria from declaring war, he resolutely declined to bring any but moral pressure to bear on her. Alexander in fact realized that his hitherto invincible ally was in difficulties, and was not so gullible as



to believe that the evacuation of Prussia had been entirely to oblige Russia. For several months—indeed from the moment of Joseph's flight from Madrid—negotiations between the French and Russian Courts had been in progress with the object of arranging a fresh interview between the two Emperors, so that the changed conditions of Europe might be discussed between them.

This interview after many postponements took place in September, 1808, at Erfurt. From the social and spectacular point of view it was an immense success. "Paris was transported to Thuringia," and the petty kings of Europe flocked to do homage to their master. Even from the political side it was, apparently at least, a remarkable triumph for Napoleon. The Czar agreed to content himself with the "Principalities" and to postpone the final settlement of the Eastern question; he accepted Napoleon's explanations about Prussia and the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. It was over the question of Austria and the Russian attitude towards Austria's military preparations that the chief difficulties arose. Alexander was gradually stiffening himself into rejection of the rôle of satellite to France. Hints were dropped to him that sane opinion in France was hostile to the overweening ambitions of the Emperor. Talleyrand himself, who was now hostile to Napoleon's policy and anxious to see a revival of European resistance, made direct and treacherous overtures to the Czar, urging him to save Europe by holding firm against Napoleon.<sup>1</sup> Angered at Alexander's obstinate refusal to put pressure on his neighbour, Napoleon's temper gave way; on one occasion he threw his hat on the floor and stamped on it; the Czar

<sup>1</sup> Talleyrand's view (probably sincere and quite arguably correct) was that the Rhine, the Pyrenees, and the Alps, were the essential French frontiers, that any further conquests were purely Napoleonic, monstrous, and ephemeral. Ollivier ("L'Empire libéral," I. 48) gives a humorous picture of the circle of deceit at Erfurt. Napoleon would give his confidences to Talleyrand; Talleyrand divulge them to the Czar, who returned to Napoleon with Talleyrand's words learnt by heart. Napoleon would complete the circle by repeating to Talleyrand (with approbation) the words of the Czar. Talleyrand's duplicity was certainly unrivalled; but it remains a question of casuistry whether he was not more bound to be loyal to what he considered the interests of France, than to the interests of Napoleon.

merely threatened to leave the room. At last Napoleon gave way, and accepted the Russian assurance that, if it came to war with Austria, Russia would side with France. The fact was that in spite of the outward demonstrations of confidence and affection the canker of distrust had eaten its way into the Czar's heart. The "glad confident morning" of Tilsit had become overclouded with the mists of suspicion, and beneath apparent agreement there lay concealed the elements of future antagonism. The "she-devils" of Spain, as Napoleon called them, were costing him dear. The Convention (12 October, 1808) that resulted from these negotiations laid it down that France and Russia were once more to approach England with proposals of peace on the basis of *uti possidetis*, i.e. Spain for France and recognition of the recent changes in Italy; Finland and the Turkish principalities for Russia. This, however, was to be kept secret so as to avoid the danger of throwing Turkey into the arms of England. In the event of ultimate resistance to this change, however, France pledged herself to assist Russia, while Russia pledged herself to assist France in the event of war with Austria. The crucial questions remained in fact unsolved; this was the limit of what Napoleon, with all his ingenuity and the careful *mise en scène* which he had prepared, had been able to effect; it was very different from what he had hoped, and far removed from the generous alliance of Tilsit.

Alexander's day of dreams was past; he had ceased to desire to share in the division of the world or in Napoleon's extravagant schemes of conquest. He was concerned now with internal administration, looked for a peaceful extension of his frontier, and no longer desired earthquakes. For Napoleon, on the other hand, the prospect of Alexander's alienation was disturbing in the extreme. His instinct told him that Austria meant business. He was confident indeed in his ability to crush her, but to do so was a lamentable loss of time, a further diversion from his main task, and there was nothing to be gained from it. Russia, he recognized, could prevent this; she was admirably placed in a half circle round Austria, and the latter would hardly be so rash as to at-

tack Russia and France at once. Russia's refusal to act as a French policeman against Austria was all the more aggravating because it would have been so easy for her and meant so much at the moment to Napoleon.

All he could do now was to make the best of the existing situation, and the first need was a crushing success in Spain. Spain had been the speck of dust in the works of the complicated machine which Napoleon had set in motion against England ; his first business was to remove it. Three veteran corps were transferred from the Elbe to the Spanish frontier ; by October 200,000 men were concentrated, and in the end of that month Napoleon, who arrived at the front in person on 5 November, hurled them against the scattered Spanish forces on the Ebro. Blake on the Spanish left in Biscay was twice defeated on 29 October and 11 November (Battles of Zornosa and Espinosa). Soult completely broke the weak Spanish centre at Burgos on 10 November, while the heaviest blow of all was struck by Lannes in the Battle of Tudela on 23 November where Palafox and Castaños were heavily defeated. The two English forces under Moore and Baird, from Lisbon and Corunna respectively, had not been able to join in this fighting, and Napoleon swept on to Madrid, winning (30 November) the celebrated minor action of the Somosierra on the way. He entered the capital on 4 December.<sup>1</sup> The last stage of the conquest of the Peninsula seemed to have arrived and Napoleon was preparing for an advance on Lisbon, when Moore came to the important decision that he both could and should strike a blow at the French communications and create a diversion which might save Portugal. He therefore joined Baird and advanced as far as Sahagun, with the intention of attacking Soult. Napoleon had believed that Moore was in full retreat on Lisbon, and when he heard of this movement returned at once to punish the English and so complete the demonstration of his strength. Moore set off at full speed for Corunna ; Napoleon thundered after him as far as Astorga, where news from Paris, news of conspiracy at home, and immediate menace of war from

<sup>1</sup> That is his troops entered on 4th, he himself on the 9th.

Austria, perhaps also despair of overtaking the English, decided him to return to France. He left Spain on 17 January, 1809. Soult continued the pursuit and badly hustled Moore in the last stages of the retreat, but was repulsed at Corunna. Moore lost his life in this action, but the English army effected its embarkation. It had not defeated the French, but by its timely diversion it had saved Portugal and Southern Spain, and taken half the sting out of Napoleon's blow in the Peninsula.

In the dark of a winter morning (23 January) Napoleon's carriage rattled up to the entrance of the Tuileries and a nervous and irritable Emperor descended from it. But half satisfied with the result of his personal intervention in Spain, he was furious at the prospect of the profitless war which was being thrust upon him by Austria, indignant at the Czar's refusal to intervene in order to prevent it, and incensed at the now patent treason of Talleyrand. His first step was to degrade that astute minister. Then he turned to confront the European situation.<sup>1</sup>

Austria had continued her preparations, Alexander his procrastinations, with the result that the European situation was hurrying to a crisis. On 8 February, in spite of the disapproval of the Archduke Charles and a considerable anti-war party, Austria decided on war; on 9 April the Archduke Charles invaded Bavaria, while at the same time the Archduke John invaded Italy and the Archduke Ferdinand the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. At the same moment the Tyrol flamed out in spontaneous insurrection. Russia, seeing that

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon gave vent to a fearful outburst of rage in his interview with Talleyrand: "You are a coward, a traitor, and a thief: you have all your life failed in your duty, you have deceived and betrayed every one. Nothing is sacred in your eyes; you would sell your own father. I have heaped benefits upon you, and yet you are capable of any treason against me. You suggested the Spanish Campaign which you now say will be my undoing: you egged me on to kill d'Enghien. What do you want? What do you hope for? You deserve that I should break you like a glass. I have the power to do so, but I despise you too much to take the trouble," and so on for half an hour. Talleyrand remained absolutely unmoved (Pasquier, "*Mémoires*," I. 358, and cp. Roederer and Monthonol).

war was now inevitable, decided that she must at least make some show of performing her treaty obligations, but at the same time gave private assurance to Austria that her intervention would not be serious. Prussia, Stein being in exile, flatly declined to have anything to do with the war; but neither Alexander nor Frederick William reflected the opinions of his people.

There was something very heroic in this desperate challenge by a crushed and enfeebled state to the greatest military genius of modern times at the zenith of his power. By dint of assiduous preparations Austria had been able to place an army of slightly over 200,000 men in the field. The troops were full of enthusiasm but untried in war. In the Archduke Charles they had a leader of noble character and unblemished military reputation. The most unsatisfactory element in the situation was the depletion of the Treasury. The effort of preparing for the war had already bled Austria white. She enjoyed the financial support of England, such irregular military assistance as Prussia—whose army had been limited by the Convention of Paris (8 September, 1808) to 42,000 men—might dare to give, and she had the promise of Russia that the support which she was bound to give France would be nominal rather than real. On the other hand Napoleon, although in 1809 he could probably put into the field more troops than at any other stage of his career, could muster little more than 200,000 on the Rhine, and this only by calling up the conscription of 1810; for nearly 300,000 were in Spain and a force of 60,000 was necessary for the defence of Italy, while 100,000 remained in reserve in France. Moreover the incessant drain of recruiting, and the absence of most of the veteran troops in Spain, involved a considerable falling off in the standard of the French troops. Nevertheless, under the skilled handling of the Emperor and his marshals, the French army remained even in 1809 a terrific engine of war.

War was declared by Austria on 9 April; Napoleon left Paris on the 12th. Anxious to make Austria appear the aggressor, he had refrained until the last moment from mobilizing his forces, with the result that when hostilities

actually began he found himself outnumbered on the Danube. Moreover by a mistake of Berthier, to whom the command had been entrusted until the Emperor should take the field, the army had been scattered in three large groups between Ratisbon, the Isar and the Leet. Napoleon found himself in a very dangerous position and the campaign of Ratisbon is a splendid example of how a military genius, so placed and put on the defensive, can extricate himself and resume the offensive. Napoleon at once decided on a compromise between his own plan and that to which Berthier had committed him, to wit, a concentration behind the River Abens with the object of uniting the army. This involved a very dangerous flank march for Davout from his forward position at Ratisbon, which he was enabled to execute by the hesitations of the Archduke. Napoleon himself dealt with Hiller on the Austrian left at Abensberg and Landshut (20 and 21 April) and, having driven him away, brought all his forces to the support of Davout in an overwhelming flank attack (Battle of Eggmühl, 22 April) which forced the Archduke to abandon Ratisbon and withdraw to the north bank of the Danube. After this the first danger was over; the Austrians were not destroyed, but they had lost their initial numerical superiority and their power of taking the offensive, and the Austrian forces in Italy and in Poland, which had met with considerable success, were obliged to withdraw.<sup>1</sup>

Napoleon, with his customary directness, now thrust straight at Vienna by the south bank of the Danube, the Archduke moving in the same direction by the northern bank. On 4 May Hiller, who was attempting to join the Archduke, was once more defeated at Ebelsberg, and on 15 May the French were in the capital. The Archduke, having restored his shattered army, intended to cross the Danube above Vienna and cut the French communications. But

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon used to speak of these days as one of his most brilliant military feats. But the Archduke, whose heart was not in the war, played into his hands. He was not, either in strength of character or military skill, within measurable distance of Napoleon. He had, moreover, a far worse army.

Napoleon had taken elaborate precautions to prevent or delay the Austrian passage of the Danube and still maintained the initiative. With great daring he bridged the Danube where its stream is divided by the Island of Lobau, and flung a strong advance guard over the river, which seized the villages of Essling and Aspern, with the object of maintaining a sort of "bridgehead" for the remainder of the army to cross. Owing to a sudden rising of the Danube, and also to the operations of the enemy who sent down boats laden with stone to break the bridge, the main bridge was carried away and the leading corps, led by Lannes and Masséna, was cut off from the main army. The Archduke at that moment had 80,000 men to deal with 30,000, but he was unable to drive the French out of Essling and only partially drove them out of Aspern. Napoleon tried to turn the day by a cavalry attack, which failed; during the night the Austrians held the French close in a half-circle; but next day Napoleon had 60,000 men on the north bank and was able to get complete possession of Aspern once more. A grand attempt was then made to break the Austrian centre, and this was only thwarted by the personal courage of the Archduke. Repeated breaking of the bridges prevented the proper reinforcement of the French line of battle, and in the end the Austrians recovered and retained Aspern while the French kept Essling, but only after it had fallen once into the hands of the Austrians. The battle had been unfavourable to the French; the gallant Lannes, the hero of Friedland, had lost his life and Napoleon found himself obliged to withdraw from the left bank. This he was only able to do by dint of great exertions. Nevertheless, with a constancy of purpose which was heroic, he determined to cling to the island, and so retain the power of recrossing the Danube, and keep the initiative in his hands. It was this decision that was the turning-point of the campaign.

The Battle of Aspern was an "Austrian Eylau," but more favourable to Austria than Eylau had been to Russia; for in this case the French had been compelled to evacuate the field. It had immediate results in Europe. Risings occurred

in Germany, and the Tyrol flamed into revolt. The war in Spain was taken up with renewed vigour, and the English landed 40,000 men in Walcheren who threatened Antwerp. They remained there till September without effecting anything, and were then compelled by sickness to return home. Napoleon now had his back to the wall. It was one of the moments of his career when his extraordinary coolness and determination stood him in good stead. He had made up his mind not to budge a hair's-breadth from his plan of campaign. He strengthened his position at Lobau, brought up all available reinforcements, procured heavy artillery from the Viennese arsenal, and on the night of 4-5 July, actually threw 170,000 men across the Danube and deployed them in battle order in the plain of the Marchfeld before the Austrians could seriously interfere with his movements.

The series of actions known as the Battle of Wagram were fought on the two following days. Napoleon's idea was to turn the Austrian left so as to cut the Archduke Charles off from the Archduke John who was expected from the east,<sup>1</sup> but the possibility of the latter's immediate arrival caused him to delay the attack until he was sure that he was not within striking distance. Meanwhile the Archduke Charles attacked and defeated the French left under Masséna, driving it towards the bridges. But the great French reserves were intact and Davout's attack on the Austrian left had by this time begun. As soon as he saw it succeeding, Napoleon, who had employed a great mass of guns and cavalry to check the Austrian right and centre, assumed the offensive all along the line, throwing a huge mass of all arms on the hostile centre. This decided the day. The Archduke withdrew northwards to Znaim, where a last action was fought, on the whole unfavourable to Charles; he had lost 37,000 men in the battle—not much more than his opponent; but the Austrian army showed a total decrease of 51,000 men and 1300 officers, the result of the retreat and moral depression. The remaining 70,000 the Archduke wished to preserve as a diplomatic makeweight: and he now made offers to Napoleon. He had

<sup>1</sup> He had been roughly handled and thrown back by Eugène on 14 June, and had fallen back on Pressburg.



never believed in the ultimate success of Austria ; and although Wagram had been no Friedland the time seemed ripe to him for an Austrian Tilsit ; and that more especially as Russia had jeopardized the whole campaign by her scandalous duplicity and was rapidly drifting away from France.

Napoleon, who had at first gone so far as to demand the abdication of the Emperor Francis, exacted heavy sacrifices from Austria. Her army was reduced to 150,000 men. In Galicia she surrendered an enormous territory, comprising 2,000,000 subjects, one-fifth being allotted to Russia and the remainder to the Grand Duchy of Warsaw, terms which suggested a resuscitation of Poland. Salzburg and the Quarter of the Inn were added to the Confederation of the Rhine. France herself took Görz, Monfalcone, and Trieste, together with Carniola and Croatia as far as the Save. Austria paid an indemnity of 85,000,000 francs, joined the blockade of England, and gave her sanction to all the French conquests receiving from France in return the guarantee of her own integrity (Peace of Schönbrunn, 13 October).

The Peace of Schönbrunn, severely as Austria seemed to be treated, heralded, though it by no means completed, a transformation in European politics by which in the end Austria took the place of Russia as in some degree the unwilling handmaid of France ; and already the unpleasant possibility of war with Russia must have crossed Napoleon's mind. Meanwhile, however, he did not despair of maintaining some sort of friendship with that power. It was at the very moment when the rupture seemed to be imminent that he made advances for a marriage with the Archduchess Anne. For some time past he had been considering the question of the succession, and had been endeavouring to reconcile himself to the idea of a divorce from Josephine. After scenes in which Napoleon displayed his adamant determination, and which involved much suffering to both, for there was true mutual affection between them, the divorce was carried through on 12 January, 1810.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> As Cambacérès said : " In two years I am morally sure we shall have war with that one of the two powers whose daughter the Emperor does not marry " (Pasquier, " Mémoires," op. cit. i. 378).

It had been rendered very difficult by the opposition of the Pope. Napoleon's relations with the Holy See had for a long time past been becoming more and more strained. This is hardly surprising; for the Pope, much wounded by the treatment he had received, had been identifying himself more and more with Napoleon's enemies and victims. This in turn moved the Emperor to a further attack on the Papacy, and in May, 1809, the Papal States had been incorporated in the French Empire, the temporal power abolished, and the Pope himself in July seized by Murat and carried first to Grenoble then to Savona, where the unfortunate Pontiff remained under close supervision, until in June, 1812, he was transferred to Fontainebleau. It was hardly likely that under these circumstances the papal sanction to the divorce would be forthcoming. Pius VI had already excommunicated the Emperor (21 May, 1809), and when the divorce was sanctioned by the Archiepiscopal Tribunal of Paris he protested, and declined to consecrate the bishops appointed by Napoleon under the Concordat. This struggle between Pope and Emperor went on till 1811 when the Pope was persuaded to sanction a decree of Napoleon (5 August, 1811) which, in the event of papal investiture being withheld for more than six months, enabled the *métropolitain* to complete it. All this trouble with the Papacy did Napoleon much harm. It not only offended Catholic opinion at home but gave a religious tinge to the opposition to him abroad, especially in Spain where the hostility to France was as much religious as national.

The Czar was much troubled by Napoleon's matrimonial proposals. He had in fact tired of the French alliance and realized how little he stood to gain by it. He therefore procrastinated and in the end declined the advances. Napoleon forestalled the rebuff by suddenly transferring his attentions to the Archduchess Marie Louise of Austria. The situation was peculiar and is difficult to unravel. The truth seems to have been that Napoleon was so completely the arch-enemy of Europe that he could only command the acquiescence of his clients—the men whom he had trampled under foot. Russia, it is true, owing to the personal infatuation of the

Czar, had voluntarily cultivated his friendship, but the alliance was unnatural, and had within it from the first the seeds of decay. Directly it was put to a real test, as it had been in the Austrian War, as it was now in the matrimonial proposals, its hollowness became perceptible. Napoleon himself realized that war with Russia was inevitable. "I shall have war with Russia," he said, "for reasons to which human will is a stranger, because they spring from the very nature of things."<sup>1</sup> The rejection of the matrimonial proposals was only a fresh step to an end which was inevitable. The marriage with the Archduchess Marie Louise took place in March, 1810. The new Empress was a commonplace woman who filled the duties of her station to the satisfaction of her husband. In March, 1811, she consummated his satisfaction by giving birth to a son who was created King of Rome.<sup>2</sup>

The years 1810 and 1811 were years of comparative tranquillity for Europe, but marred by the disturbing sense that a great and inevitable catastrophe was impending. Napoleon concentrated himself on his effort to ruin England by rendering the Continental System completely watertight; and it was in the endeavour to stop the chinks through which English and Colonial goods still trickled into Continental markets that he found himself involved in fresh and terrible complications in 1812. In order to stiffen the Continental System Napoleon imposed (on 5 August, 1810) a tariff<sup>3</sup> of about 50 per cent *ad valorem*, upon all goods of English origin however carried; this struck at the considerable trade which was still done in English colonial goods imported in bottoms either

<sup>1</sup> Vandal, "Napoléon et Alexandre" (1891, etc.), II. 458, and "Mémoires de Metternich," II. 109.

<sup>2</sup> One of the consequences of the breach between France and the Papacy was that Rome was declared the second city of the Empire.

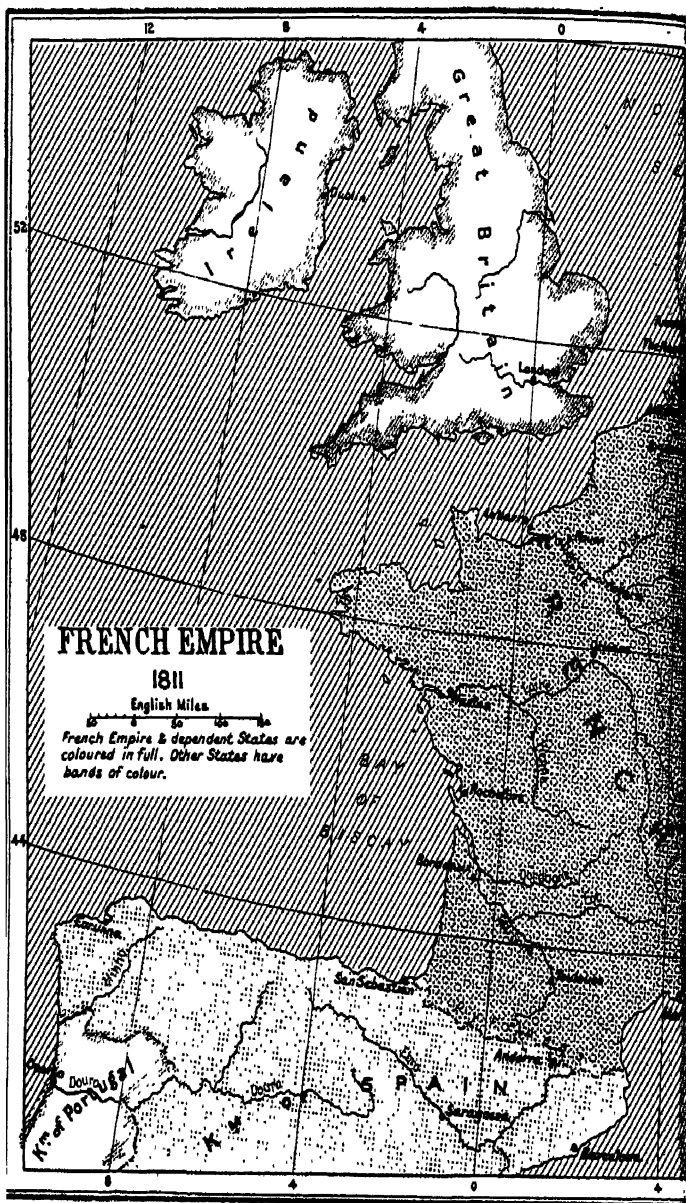
<sup>3</sup> Trianon Tariff (5 August, 1810). The following articles were subject to an import duty per kilogram as follows: American cotton, 8 francs; Levant cotton, 4 francs if imported by sea, and 2 francs if imported by land; other cottons, 6 francs; cane sugar, 3 francs; refined sugar, 4 francs; China tea, 9 francs; green tea, 6 francs; other teas, 1.50 francs; coffee, 4 francs; indigo, 9 francs, etc. ("Cambridge Modern History," IX, 373).

genuinely or ostensibly non-English. Prussia was compelled to impose similar duties, but Russia declined to go beyond the terms of the Treaty of Tilsit. This was a fresh impulse in the direction of war between France and Russia. Napoleon's next step was to issue the Fontainebleau decrees (18-25 October), ordering the destruction of all British goods within his dominions and those of his allies, and establishing special tribunals to deal with the miscreants who introduced these goods. The decrees caused much want and suffering, in spite of the fact that special licences for the introduction of certain indispensable English (or colonial) wares were sold at a very high figure. But they showed Napoleon's determination to carry his policy to its logical conclusion. When we consider the enormous area over which Napoleon now ruled we can appreciate the importance of measures which, had they applied merely to France in her old limits, would have been a trifle. Moreover it was just at this juncture that Napoleon began a great extension of his borders. The reluctance of his brother Louis, whom he had raised to the throne of Holland in 1806, to carry out loyally the embargo on English goods provoked the Emperor to make an end of Dutch independence. In July, 1810, Holland was incorporated with France; and Napoleon proceeded to annex the whole of the coast line from the Rhine to the Elbe. This involved the deposition of the Duke of Oldenburg, a prince of the Russian house, another step on the road to war with Russia.

Allusion has been made to the continuance of hostilities in Spain; all that Napoleon could hope was to hold Spain while he settled matters with Russia. As the war in Spain was greatly influenced by the rupture between France and Russia, it is necessary to bring the narrative of that war up to date before turning to the new war into which France was now rushing. On his return from Spain after his failure to overtake Moore, Napoleon had announced that the Spanish resistance was "almost at an end" (January, 1809). The fall of Saragossa, 20 February, and a series of minor successes in Catalonia hardly justified this announcement, and the appointment of Sir Arthur Wellesley, the victor of Vimiero,











to the command of the English forces in the Peninsula (22 April, 1809) marked a new stage in the war: Meanwhile the French under Soult had commenced the invasion of Portugal from Corunna (9 March) and on the 29th had stormed Oporto, where the invasion hung fire. On the 28th Victor, who had instructions to march on Seville, had severely defeated the Spanish at Medellin; but his operations had also come to a standstill. This double suspension gave Wellesley time, and on 7 May he began to advance against Oporto; on 12 May by a marvellous feat he crossed the Douro in broad daylight under the nose of the French, forced Soult to abandon the city, all but cut off his retreat, and handled him very severely before he managed to effect a junction with Ney, where his arrival was opportune, as all Galicia was in a blaze of insurrection. Wellesley now turned upon Victor, who on 14 May had reached Alcantara, but on the news of Soult's discomfiture had evacuated Estramadura and taken up a position on the Tagus covering Madrid, with head-quarters at Talavera. On 18 July Wellesley joined forces with the Spanish under Cuesta and advanced against him. A diversion by which the Spanish General Venegas was to draw off the troops in and around Madrid failed altogether, with the result that Victor was reinforced to nearly the same strength as Wellesley and Cuesta; and on 27 July attacked the Anglo-Spanish army at Talavera. He was only driven back after very severe fighting. This was the first great success of Wellesley's battle tactics in which he opposed line to column or mixed attack. Soult now reappeared on the scene and, to avoid battle against superior numbers, Wellesley was obliged to retire on Badajoz. Thus, in spite of the victory of Talavera, he had been foiled in one of the main objects of his campaign—the recovery of Madrid.

While these events had been taking place in Central Spain, fighting had been general all over the Peninsula. The Spanish General Blake had had a series of sharp brushes with Suchet in Aragon, but had not been able to recover Saragossa. In Catalonia St. Cyr had spent the whole year in the Siege of Gerona which fell on 10 December after a defence

scarcely inferior in tenacity to that of Saragossa. Sebastiani had defeated Venegas at Almonacid on 11 August. In the autumn, against the advice of Wellington,<sup>1</sup> the Spanish made a double attack on Madrid and suffered the defeats of Alba de Tormes (28 November) and Oñana (19 November). Napoleon, who was by this time free of complications in Central Europe, now sent powerful reinforcements to Spain, and Soult conquered Andalusia in a winter campaign. It was fortunate that he had not turned on Portugal, where Wellington's defensive preparations were being pushed on apace but were by no means ready. Napoleon had postponed the conquest of Portugal until the following year and it was not till August, 1810, that Masséna, perhaps the most distinguished of the marshals, led an army, reinforced to a strength of 70,000 men, over the Portuguese frontier. He had considerable trouble in reducing the outlying fortresses of Astorga and Ciudad Rodrigo. The frontier fortress of Almeida fell with greater ease on 27 August. On 17 September Masséna pushed on into Portugal, where a great surprise awaited him. Wellington had gone about the defensive preparations with praiseworthy thoroughness. Masséna found the country depopulated and wasted; he pushed down the Mondego as best he could towards Coimbra. Wellington chose an admirable defensive position across his path at Busaco (11 September), upon which the French delivered two ill-considered frontal attacks and were repulsed with great slaughter. It then occurred to them to try and turn the position, whereupon Wellington with praiseworthy caution and self-restraint withdrew in the direction of Lisbon. A fortnight later (11 October), much to his astonishment, Masséna found himself brought up by an immensely strong line of fortifications. These were the famous lines of Torres Vedras, to the construction of which Wellington had devoted enormous care. They consisted of three lines, the outer one twenty-nine miles in length, and to break through them was quite beyond the power of Masséna's army as he re-

<sup>1</sup> Sir Arthur Wellesley had been created Viscount Wellington and Baron Douro on 4 September; he was created Duke of Wellington in May, 1814.

cognized at once. After waiting for a month before the lines,<sup>1</sup> he retired upon Santarem, where he passed the winter. In March he commenced his retreat towards Spain, closely pursued by Wellington. The invasion of Portugal had completely failed, owing not so much to defeat in the field as to Wellington's defensive measures, and the desolation he had spread in front of the advancing French.

Elsewhere in the Peninsula a fair degree of success had attended French arms. Soult had advanced to Badajoz whence it had been intended that he should co-operate with Masséna; but his advance was both late and leisurely. A diversion from Cadiz resulted in the remarkable little Battle of Barrosa, an Anglo-Portuguese force of 4500 defeating a French force of 7000 (5 March). In the spring of 1811 Beresford, whom Wellington had detached to deal with Soult, was investing Badajoz; Soult confronted him at Albuera (16 May), and fell on his right wing. A confused and terribly bloody action ensued in which Beresford was victorious; the siege of Badajoz was resumed, Wellington himself assuming the command. In June, however, the appearance of Marmont (who had replaced Masséna) and Soult obliged him to raise the siege. He transferred his attention to Ciudad Rodrigo, only, however, to be obliged once more to retire before the approach of Marmont in superior force (25 September, 1811). But although the French armies could check Wellington's advance yet, for all their enormous numerical strength in Spain (upwards of 300,000 men), they were unable to resume the invasion of Portugal, so stubborn was the local guerilla resistance of the Spaniards. In this indecisive and indeed menacing condition Napoleon was obliged to leave affairs in Spain to turn his attention to the gathering complications in the East.

We have seen how many seeds of discord had already been sown between Russia and France: the Austrian marriage with

<sup>1</sup> For an account, from the French side, of the condition of affairs at Torres Vedras see Marmont: "The country was a complete desert . . . soon the soldiers were obliged to go 15-20 leagues to maraud; one-third of the army was always thus dispersed. All discipline vanished, etc. etc." (quoted by Thoulas, "*Les transformations de l'armée française*," II. 47-8).

was lost almost from the beginning and no one but a man of Napoleon's indomitable nerve and unswerving self-confidence would have refused to acknowledge it until he was involved in the heart of the enemy's country. Failure it was, but heroic failure, which commands admiration as well as criticism.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon, who was too *rusé* to be candid even when he was dethroned and an exile, was nevertheless quite frank in blaming himself for the Russian and Spanish failures: "I myself was my worst enemy," he said.

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Both these last are valuable works.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### NAPOLEON

(1812-1814)

**D**URING the period between the Peace of Schönbrunn (October, 1809) and the breach with Russia (May, 1812) Napoleon's moral position in Europe had undergone a considerable modification. Already he was beginning to feel the opposition of peoples rather than that of governments; in every direction the offended sense of nationality had awoken, was awaking, or was about to awaken. The declaration of war by Austria had been a premature outbreak of national hostility. A similar national revival was in progress in Prussia and there, thanks to the sluggish obstinacy of Frederick William, it had time to develop that real strength of which Napoleon was to experience the full force in 1813. In Spain again the opposition to French arms derived its strength not only from the support it received from England but from the fact that it was national in character. It might even be said that in France itself Napoleon—the man who was himself without a nation—had run counter to the national cause and was provoking a national opposition; this fact had been perceived by Talleyrand as early as 1808, and from that time forward he had worked for national, as opposed to Napoleonic, ends with a perspicacity which was only equalled by his treachery. In a sense this corrupt and immoral unfrocked priest is the national hero of the later Napoleonic period. From 1809 onwards he is pursuing the true national ends while Napoleon is spending himself and spending France in the struggle for universal dominion. In that struggle the next step was the subjugation of Russia, and to that Napoleon bent all his energy. He had determined to make the

Russian campaign a visible proof of the immensity of his power. Every quarter of Europe had been ransacked for recruits. Not only were there Austrian and Prussian contingents, but Poles, Swiss, Spaniards, Portuguese, Croats, Illyrians, and Germans of every description were enlisted. Rather more than half of the 600,000 men were foreigners. Of course this meant a considerable lowering of the standard of efficiency; in 1812 the Grand Army was by no means what it had been, and yet the remarkable thing is not this decline but the high fighting qualities which were developed by this motley host. It was in leadership and discipline that the army of 1812 was most deficient. Lannes was dead, Soult and Marmont were engaged elsewhere, while many of the Marshals who remained were weary of war and demoralized by success. The great rewards and dignities which Napoleon had heaped upon his generals had had an injurious effect. They were no longer dependent on their military career. They longed for peace to enjoy the good things with which they had been glutted: and if Napoleon in 1812 was not the man he had been, the criticism applies with far greater force to his marshals. Moreover Napoleon's concern for the prestige of his dynasty had moved him to give high command to his brother Jérôme and his stepson Eugène neither of whom were really qualified for it and whose mistakes were to a great extent to compromise the campaign. This defect in leadership was the more serious in that the magnitude of the army and the physical conditions of Russia made it impossible for the Emperor to exercise his accustomed control over his subordinates.<sup>1</sup> It is evident that the vast size of the Grand Army was a handicap rather than a help in the Russian campaign. The corps-commanders no longer commanded corps but armies, and men like Jérôme and Eugène and even Ney were not fitted to command more than 30,000 men. Again the army was so immense that it could only have been

<sup>1</sup> It was said of Napoleon *il a trop gouverné*, and it might have been said with equal truth *il a trop commandé*. His marshals, brilliant subordinates though most of them were, had been given little chance of cultivating independence.

properly fed by railways, and the appalling difficulties of commissariat paralysed in 1812 the rapidity which in previous campaigns had contributed so largely to Napoleon's success. Moreover the necessity for spreading the advance over a vast area meant a loss of combination. Finally the great numerical superiority of the French confirmed the decision of the Russians to rely on the defensive. For an army of 400,000, which was the utmost strength of the Russians, to challenge one of 600,000 to pitched battle would have been madness.<sup>1</sup> Thus by the very magnitude of his preparations Napoleon condemned himself to the precise form of campaign that he should have been most anxious to avoid.<sup>2</sup>

When, on 23 June, the Emperor crossed the Niemen at Kowno he must have realized that everything depended on his ability to bring the Russians to battle without delay. The fate of the campaign stood to be decided in its earliest stages. But instead of encouraging the Russians to fight by allowing the armies of Barclay and Bagration to effect a junction he almost seems to have been carried away by his professional relish for a fine military stroke and thrust himself like a wedge between the two, directing his brother Jérôme to draw Bagration away southwards. This plan failed owing partly to faulty information and partly to the difficulty of concerted action between armies so widely separated, but also owing to the stupidity of Jérôme, who was now superseded by Davout. Napoleon made a long halt at Vilna, the capital of Lithuania, to rearrange his commissariat, which had gone to pieces directly the advance began, while Barclay withdrew to Drissa, where a fatuous imitation of the lines of Torres Vedras had been prepared. This was soon abandoned and, a fresh attempt at a junction with Bagration at Vitebsk being thwarted by a

<sup>1</sup> These enormous figures represent the total force available on either side; they include the wing corps, reinforcements, and troops employed on the lines of communication. Nothing like these numbers were actually placed on the field, but the figures are a fair basis on which to compare the forces of France and Russia.

<sup>2</sup> Also, as Fournier (op. cit. II. 183) points out, it compelled him to delay his advance till summer, in order to avoid carrying fodder for the horses.

on his ill-starred expedition against Moscow. By this time public opinion in Russia demanded a battle; but it was not easy to find a position of any kind in the featureless plain between Smolensk and Moscow. In spite of this Barclay was preparing for a battle when he found himself superseded by old Prince Kutusov, a much more typical Russian<sup>1</sup> and therefore much better qualified to lead a national resistance. Kutusov withdrew to Borodino,<sup>2</sup> and there proceeded to strengthen a narrow position near the junction of the rivers Kolotza and Moskowa, with his right on the former river and his left on some forests which also protected his rear. Napoleon, who was determined not to let the enemy slip through his hands once more, and, remembering what had happened at Smolensk, had rejected the idea of a turning movement which Davout suggested, resolved on a frontal attack at any rate until the enemy were irremediably committed. Against Russian troops entrenched, such an attack could not but be frightfully costly; but the slaughter at Borodino (the Moskowa), owing to the close massing of the troops and the deadly fire of the artillery, surpassed all previous records. The Russians lost more than 40,000 men, the French something approaching 30,000.<sup>3</sup> It has been usual to say that Napoleon, who was suffering from a severe chill, was not at his best at Borodino and, by refusing to engage the guard, threw away his chance of a decisive victory without thereby diminishing the slaughter of the rest of the army. The sacrifice of troops was inevitable from the moment when a frontal attack was decided on; and we know that Napoleon had good reason for this decision. The refusal to send in the reserves is explicable on general grounds of policy. At such a distance from reinforcements, it is not surprising that Napoleon should not wish to risk his guard. Military opinion justifies the withholding of the reserves, which were bound to have been terribly cut up in dealing with the Russians and

<sup>1</sup> Barclay was of Scottish extraction.

<sup>2</sup> Seventy-five miles W.S.W. of Moscow.

<sup>3</sup> I.e. French, 24 per cent; Russians, 43 per cent. The figures are from Thoulmas; if 50,000 is the Russian total then the percentage is 35-36.



would have had no decisive effect on the fortunes of the day. As for the conduct of the battle; it is sufficient refutation of the idea that Napoleon was off his day, to quote the opinion of the Prussian staff.<sup>1</sup> "The way in which he (Napoleon) directed his principal attack . . . still serves as a model in positions where a real frontal attack on the enemy cannot be avoided; as also the way in which he prepared the attack by the action of heavy artillery, etc."<sup>2</sup>

Napoleon had staked his all on the certainty that the fall of the capital would terminate the Russian resistance. He was now to be rudely awakened. Borodino had indeed opened the gates of Moscow to him, but when he reached the capital (14 September) it was to find it practically deserted, and soon after his entry the city, which was principally wooden, took fire in several places and, fanned by the changing wind, the flames destroyed three-quarters of it before they were extinguished. The conflagration was certainly not the work of Napoleon, and is now generally believed to have been that of the Russian authorities, headed by Count Rostopchine the Governor of Moscow.<sup>3</sup>

It was now that Napoleon made the final mistake which turned the Russian campaign into a catastrophe of appalling magnitude. He refused to believe that the defeat of his army and the occupation of his capital could fail to compel Alexander to accept terms. His previous experience of the Czar confirmed him in this sanguine expectation. He therefore made overtures to Alexander who, however, displayed the utmost determination. In this way September and the greater part of October slipped by, and when Napoleon left Moscow on 19 October it was to face the rigours of a Russian winter,<sup>4</sup> and to face them through his own mistaken optimism.

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon himself regarded Borodino as one of his finest battles (Gourgaud, *op. cit.* II. xxx); he puts it on a level with Austerlitz and calls it superb.

<sup>2</sup> "Der Schlacterfolg," *op. cit.*

<sup>3</sup> The article in the "Times" on the centenary of the battle elicited letters confirming this view.

<sup>4</sup> The winter was in fact (in spite of what Napoleon said to the contrary) a mild one for Russia, but no Russian winter is child's play. The

On the wings meanwhile Wittgenstein in the north had received large reinforcements from Bernadotte, and now outnumbered St. Cyr; while in the south the junction of Tchitchagov (who had been released from Moldavia by the peace between Russia and Turkey) with Tormassov made the Russian army in that quarter greatly superior to that of Schwarzenberg. Kutusov had withdrawn southwards after evacuating Moscow; he had entrenched himself at Tarutino, and on 18 October inflicted a severe defeat, especially injurious to the French cavalry, at Vinkovo on Murat who had been sent out to keep in touch with him. It was this which awoke Napoleon to the necessity of leaving Moscow. His intention was to effect a retreat on Smolensk via Kaluga, by a route more southerly than that by which he had come, to avoid a general action, but if possible to outmanœuvre Kutusov. This plan was almost immediately ruined. A Russian force disputed the road to Kaluga with the French vanguard, where it crosses a river at Maloyaroslavetz (24 October); a hotly contested action ended slightly in favour of the French, but Napoleon found that he was unable to proceed southward without engaging in a pitched battle, and, abandoning his original plan, swung back (26 October) upon the old route which he struck at Mozhaisk. Thus a partial tactical success involved a severe strategical defeat. From the moment when this decision was forced upon the Emperor the doom of the Grand Army was sealed. Indeed it might have been more rapid and overwhelming (though nothing could have made it more terrible and complete) had not Kutusov, partly by calculation and partly owing to temperamental limitations, relapsed into comparative inactivity. He probably realized how completely the climate and conditions of the country would do his work for him, and while he harassed the French retreat he held back from decisive action, throwing away chance after chance, so that he was even suspected of favouring the escape of the enemy. The situation of the Grand Army

winter did not set in till late in the retreat, when disaster was inevitable, but when it did it rendered the disaster annihilating.

was now terrible ; confronted with a 400 mile march amid the desolation of a Russian winter it was crowded on the devastated track which its own invasion had scored across the country. Laden with baggage, artillery, and the spoils of Moscow it was without horses, fodder, food, or clothing ; and across its line of retreat were moving the forces of Tchitchagov and Wittgenstein which those of Schwarzenberg, St. Cyr, and Victor were powerless to contain.<sup>1</sup> Indeed the operations of both Napoleon's right and left wing had been paralysed. The release of Tchitchagov from the Turkish War by the Treaty of Bucharest (May, 1812) had placed the Austrian Commander Schwarzenberg on the defensive, and the Russian force was free to throw itself across the French line of retreat. In the north St. Cyr had not been strong enough to deal with Wittgenstein, and Victor, with the only French reserve, had been called from Smolensk to help him. But even this accession of strength did not prevent Wittgenstein from drawing down towards the decisive point, Borisov on the Beresina.

Meanwhile the Grand Army, its demoralization increasing daily with the advance of winter, was dragging its weary length towards Smolensk ; at Viasma (3 November) a large portion of it had to run the gauntlet of a Russian force, and suffered fresh loss (4000 killed and wounded, 3000 prisoners). Reaching Smolensk (9 November) Napoleon became aware that Kutusov was still hovering to the south and that a hostile force was at Vitebsk. This was the army of Wittgenstein which had defeated St. Cyr and Victor at Tchatchniki in October. Further and immediate retreat was thus imperative. Ney was practically abandoned by the Emperor at Smolensk and only saved a fragment of his contingent, 900 in all, by his personal courage. Ney's whole conduct throughout the trials of the retreat deserves a special word of praise ; he stood out amongst all the leaders as the most dauntless and unmoved in time of disaster. Napoleon himself was nearly cut off at Krasnoi and was only saved by Kutusov's hesitation. The crisis of the retreat was now approaching. A powerful Russian force under Tchitchagov was awaiting the approach of

<sup>1</sup> That of Schwarzenberg made no attempt to do so.

the worn-out army on the banks of the Beresina, and on 21 November had wrested the bridge from the French who were holding it; Kutusov was on his left flank with 40,000 men, Wittgenstein on his right with 30,000. Napoleon had less than 40,000 efficient troops at his disposal. With these he advanced to the point of danger. By demonstrations below Borisov he secured time for the construction of two bridges above the town. The Emperor and the bulk of the troops crossed on 27 November. Davout and Victor were kept back to enable the non-combatants to get across. The bridges broke down repeatedly and were repeatedly blocked; the disorderly crowd behaved as panic-stricken crowds are prone to behave; the scene on and about the bridges was horrible, the carnage enormous. The Russian attacks on either side of the river were courageously repulsed; Oudinot and Ney on the one bank, Victor on the other, covered themselves with glory; the latter ultimately crossing the bridge in safety with the bulk of his troops. The passage of the Beresina was a military triumph, in every other respect an appalling catastrophe. Quite half of the remnant of the Grand Army perished and an unknown number of non-combatants. Six days later Napoleon, recognizing that at the head of a mere handful of troops (hardly more than 5000) he was useless, set out for Paris and, travelling day and night, reached the capital on the night of 18-19 December, almost at the same moment as his own bulletin announcing with proper circumspection and reservation the loss of his army.

Thus in complete and tragic disaster ended the most ambitious of Napoleon's military undertakings; for the task which he bequeathed to Murat was little more than the gathering up of the few fugitives who struggled across the frontier. For the first time in his career Napoleon had personally failed without being able to conceal the fact or to cast the blame on to other shoulders. It was not, as he said it was, the Russian winter, which had been exceptionally mild, nor the behaviour of his army, which had fought and marched with wonderful bravery and endurance, nor even the decline which was becoming apparent in his own physical powers

which had brought disaster.<sup>1</sup> Rather it was the unexpected determination of the Czar, the dogged resistance and passive courage of the Russian troops ; but above all the unparalleled magnitude of the task Napoleon had set himself. The vast size of the country, the scarcity of roads, the lack of all supplies, the distance from base ; all these were new difficulties for Napoleon ; he had faced them courageously with absolute confidence in his power of overcoming them, and he had failed. He has been harshly criticized for his unwillingness to recognize his failure ; but there was something splendid in the refusal to admit that he was beaten, however tragic was the result to his unfortunate army. He had failed as a general to carry out the impossible military task which as Emperor he had set himself. The failure was political even more than military. For while his military position might be restored, his political schemes were ruined.

The terrible and dramatic catastrophe that had overtaken Napoleon in Russia had an importance that could not be measured by its material extent alone, unparalleled though that was. It had struck the imagination of Europe, above all that of Prussia. That downtrodden power now exchanged her ignoble lethargy for a national upheaval against the tyrant, which was all the more fierce in consequence of the humiliations he had made her suffer. The Russian catastrophe, in fact, was the signal for the national uprising of the Central European States which had long been in preparation, and Napoleon, in 1813-4, was confronted with a form of opposition, to which indeed he had been introduced in Spain and Russia, but which he never really understood. Henceforth in Central Europe as well as in Spain he had to deal not with governments and chancelleries and pliable monarchs, but with a national spirit which swept governments, chancelleries, and monarchs along with it to victory.

This was the great transformation that marked the winter of 1812-3. But even apart from this Napoleon's position was

<sup>1</sup> Curiously enough the Emperor had recovered much of his health on the retreat. He had seldom performed a more successful military feat than the passage of the Beresina.

sufficiently alarming. He had lost not only his army but to some extent his reputation, as well as something of his self-confidence and physical health in Russia. Napoleon's military reputation indeed was so great that it might be expected, though impaired, to survive even the Russian failure; health, however, and that inspiring confidence in "his star" which had distinguished his early campaigns he never permanently recovered. From the day when the retreat from Moscow began, however he might disguise it even from himself, his feet were on the earth, he was a mere man among men, a transcendent genius still but no longer a triumphant and inspiring demi-god. As to the army, a fresh one could be, and was, with marvellous rapidity, improvised to replace the old; the efficiency, however, and equipment, and above all the cavalry of an army cannot be improvised. There was no comparison between the old army and that of 1813.

It was not only in Russia that Napoleon's armies had been worsted in 1812—the course of affairs in Spain also had been uniformly disastrous. We left Wellington doggedly retreating in face of superior numbers from the blockade of Ciudad Rodrigo (25 September, 1811); the Spaniards in that commendable state of sporadic rebellion which was the best guarantee against a real concentration of the French forces; and the French, with 300,000 men in the Peninsula, unable to bring more than 70,000 into the field against the Anglo-Portuguese army. The effort on either side seemed for the moment to be spent, and during the winter (1811-2) the position bordered on a stale-mate; Macdonald in Catalonia could record little progress, and the only French success was that of Suchet at Sagunto (25 October, 1811) over Blake and a purely Spanish army, which led (9 January, 1812) to the surrender of Valencia with 16,000 men. Napoleon set great store on the capture of Valencia. But it was the concentration on Valencia that really gave Wellington his chance.

Wellington now determined to take advantage of the fact that the French were scattered in winter cantonments to snatch at Ciudad Rodrigo and Badajoz. On 19 January he succeeded in storming the former before Marmont could con-

concentrate an army to defend it, and on 6 April he performed a similar feat at Badajoz. These successes were all-important, for they put the gates of Spain into British hands. During this winter Napoleon had begun to draw on the French armies in Spain for his Russian enterprise, so that in the spring of 1812 Wellington was not only better placed owing to his military successes but had to deal with an enemy weaker by 30,000 picked men. In June, therefore, having previously cut the bridge over the Tagus at Alvaraz to prevent the approach of Soult from Andalusia, he advanced against Marmont at Salamanca. After a campaign of manoeuvres on 22 July the Marshal involved himself in an action with Wellington. He violated a tactical principle by attempting to execute a flank march in face of the enemy, with a view to turning Wellington's right. Wellington was not the man to let slip such an opportunity; his victory was decisive; the French lost 8000 killed and wounded and 7000 prisoners. Their whole plan of campaign was ruined; King Joseph fled from Madrid, and on 12 August Wellington entered the capital; Soult abandoned Andalusia and the French forces in the south retired to Valencia.

For the moment the clearing of the south and centre of Spain told against Wellington, the French being at last really concentrated. An attempt to reach the upper Ebro failed, for the allies were unable to take Burgos (September-October, 1812) and, in face of the united armies of Joseph, Soult, and Clausel, Wellington had to fall back on Ciudad Rodrigo. But the drain on the French armies to repair Napoleon's losses in Russia was by this time severe, and at the close of 1812 the French position in the Peninsula was weaker than ever. Southern and Central Spain had been abandoned; Wellington, though reduced to temporary inactivity, was intact and undefeated, while the French forces were steadily dwindling. Certainly there was no compensation in Spain for the French disasters elsewhere.

Meanwhile Napoleon had been displaying an energy which even he himself had never surpassed. The bulk of this was necessarily directed to the reconstruction and reorganization of the army. But he was not inattentive to other matters.

The national finances were causing him great anxiety ; the Exchequer was confronted with huge deficits, and the national credit had been ruined by the collapse of the Russian expedition. Napoleon found a new resource in the communal properties, which, in return for a fixed revenue payable from the Exchequer, he now seized and converted into State property ; it was an unworthy act of brigandage and shows the extremities in which the Emperor was placed. One other matter outside the reorganization of the army occupied his attention, the termination of the quarrel with the Papacy. In the position in which the Emperor now found himself he could no longer afford to wound Catholic feeling. Pius VI was at Fontainebleau and on 25 January, 1813, after a long series of interviews, in which the Emperor displayed all his old power of diplomacy and dialectics, an agreement between the Empire and the Papacy was signed. Napoleon got his way in the vexed matter of investiture, but the Pope was granted the appointment of the six Roman prelates and also of ten in France and Italy. He was at the same time granted an annual revenue of 10,000,000 *livres*. This new Concordat of January, 1813, did not stand, being shortly afterwards disavowed by the Pope : but it was of considerable immediate political value to the Emperor.

While Napoleon was thus occupied in France the European situation had been profoundly modified in a direction unfavourable to him. Though the Russian campaign was over Russia remained for the present the chief antagonist of France ; but she was much exhausted and there was a strong party, headed by Kutusov, which resented the idea that Russia should spend herself to save Europe. Nevertheless, though somewhat half-heartedly, she was for some time the rallying point of the new coalition. England of course maintained her attitude of implacable hostility to Napoleon, but her sphere of activity, important as it was, was not in Central Europe. On 30 December occurred the first sign of the defection of Prussia. Yorck, who had led the Prussian contingent in Russia, signed with Russia the Convention of Tauroggen.<sup>1</sup> The passage of Prussia

<sup>1</sup> He declared his corps neutral and undertook not to move against Russia even if ordered to do so by Frederick William.



from alliance with France to alliance with Russia was by no means rapid and was not completed at Tauroggen. Frederick William, who was still hesitating, repudiated the Convention and maintained diplomatic, even amiable, relations with Napoleon for some time longer; and it was not till 26 February that a treaty was signed between Prussia and Russia at Kalisch. But while her King was hesitating Prussia was arming. That she was able to arm to any purpose was due in the main to the patriotism and sagacity of Scharnhorst. The Prussian army had been fixed by treaty at 40,000 to 45,000 men with the colours. Napoleon had thought to reduce Prussia to military impotence, but in reality, when he imposed this restriction on her army, he invented for her the short-service system which was to be not only his undoing but the undoing of his nephew, Napoleon III. Scharnhorst had no other resource but to pass men rapidly through the army and, by the creation of a strong reserve, to secure a power of numerical expansion. At the same time a national militia or *landwehr* was created, which formed a kind of storage reservoir for this reserve. The revitalization of the Prussian army was not due, however, to the short service system alone, but also to the tactical and administrative reforms of Scharnhorst.

Prussia called in her short-service men and formed as fast as possible fresh units under officers on the retired list. The results when war broke out did not seem to be great. The field army amounted to no more than 30,000 to 40,000 men, but the reserve formations, untrained, ill armed and ill officered though they were, were still able to take over garrison work and to release all the regular troops for active service as well as to form a reserve from which the regular army was kept up to its strength, and even gradually increased. By the autumn the Prussians had over 150,000 troops in the field. These included large drafts from the *landwehr* which at first behaved badly but gradually hardened into excellent troops. Nevertheless it is clear that it was not the *landwehr* that saved Prussia any more than it was the *levée en masse* that saved France in 1792-3. The old regular *cadres* with which

the regiments were ultimately brigaded remained the backbone of the Prussian army.

All these military efforts would have been unavailing had they not been inspired and backed by a new national feeling. The Prussia of 1813 is no longer the old Prussia but a new nation fired with patriotic feeling, nursing her fearful grievances, burning to wipe out the insults that Napoleon had heaped upon her, and ready to shed the last drop of her blood in a war of liberation. This was a new phenomenon. It is profoundly true, even more profoundly so than it appears at first sight, that Napoleon was the real creator of the German nation; and now in 1813 it was not so much the old Prussia of 1806 and 1807 with which he was to cross swords, as the embryo of that modern Germany with which we are familiar.

While Prussia was preparing on these remarkable lines, the position of Austria was very difficult and dubious. From the political, as distinguished from the national, point of view, the European ascendancy of Russia was far more distasteful to her than that of France. Metternich advocated a policy of mediation with a view to securing a peaceful settlement. One thing was certain, however; Austria could no longer be reckoned on as the ally of France; all that Napoleon could hope was that he might keep her from joining his enemies. It was unfortunate for the new coalition that it was unable to press the French in the early months of 1813 before reinforcements could be brought up and while Eugène, who had succeeded Murat in January, was struggling to extricate the remnants of the French Army of Russia. Blücher and Wittgenstein might have dealt summarily with Eugène. Napoleon had hoped, or had said that he hoped, to hold the line of the Niemen; this was soon found to be impossible. The defection of the Prussians obliged Eugène to fall back on the Oder in February and in March on the Elbe. Here he held on for a time, but when Napoleon took the field in April he was not able to establish his base, either on the Niemen or the Oder, or even on the Elbe.

By tremendous exertions and an organizing brilliancy

which he himself never surpassed, Napoleon was able in April to appear at Erfurt with an army of more than 180,000 men. As a matter of fact 673,000 men had been called to the colours, of whom, however, only about 273,000 were available in Germany. The bulk of the troops, however, were mere boys, 240,000 being under nineteen and 40,000 between nineteen and twenty.<sup>1</sup> Its chief weakness was its cavalry, for less than any other can that arm be improvised. The artillery, however, was good and very numerous—and a good artillery is the best way of strengthening raw infantry.<sup>2</sup> Eugène in the neighbourhood of Magdeburg was reinforced to about 60,000, his mission being to guard the Thuringian Forest and threaten Saxony; Ney on the lower Main had about the same number. This army, of which the Emperor was ultimately to take command in person, was to concentrate at Erfurt, while a third army (40,000), organized in Italy and Bavaria and commanded by Bertrand and Oudinot, was to

<sup>1</sup> See Rousset, "La Grande Armée de 1813," ch. xiv., and cp. Osten-Sacken, "Die Französische Armee in Jahre 1813" (1889). Napoleon's numerical strength in 1813 seems to have been in the region of 600,000. Reckoning the Russian army as lost, he had:—

(1) The 1813 conscripts . . . . .	140,000
(2) A few trained soldiers at depots . . . . .	—
(3) The cohorts of the National Guard (one of his first steps was to decree these available for active service) . . . .	80,000
(4) The reduction of the age-limit to eighteen produced another 100,000 . . . . .	100,000
(5) The conscripts of 1814 . . . . .	150,000
(6) A further 180,000 decreed by the Senate in April . . .	180,000
	<hr/>
	650,000
Deduct as unfit for active service, say . . . . .	50,000
	<hr/>
	600,000

At the commencement of operations, however, Napoleon really only had about 182,000 men and 411 cannon at the front, not reckoning troops in Italy and excluding Davout's corps, which was on the lower Elbe, and Victor's army, which was not yet fit to take the field. Less than 150,000 men were engaged on the French side at Lutzen.

<sup>2</sup> The new troops were commanded by the old officers and non-commissioned officers of the *Grande Armée*—an important point.

converge by way of Coburg. By these combinations Napoleon hoped to engage the forces of the coalition in the neighbourhood of Leipzig with about 200,000 men. By his marvellous activity and genius he had in fact placed himself in a very favourable position. On 15 April he left St. Cloud, and on the 25th he was at the head of 160,000 men at Erfurt, while the enemy under Wittgenstein, Blücher, Yorck, and Wintzengerode<sup>1</sup> lay behind the Elster and the Pleisse with no more than 80,000, Bülow being away to the north in the direction of Magdeburg, and Tormassov lingering far to the rear. If only he could utilize his numerical superiority to inflict a crushing defeat on the main body of the enemy the game would be once more in Napoleon's hands.

On 1 May the Emperor crossed the Saale and advanced on Leipzig. On 2 May the enemy fell on his right flank before his army was united, and it was only with difficulty, and helped by the hesitations of the Russian commanders, that he was able to maintain himself and to throw his converging reinforcements on the enemy's flanks. It was a brilliant piece of generalship and a rare display of fighting quality for raw troops, and this Battle of Lützen or Gross-Görchen, had considerable moral value. Napoleon's losses, however (upwards of 20,000), exceeded those of his opponents. The way to Dresden was now open and Napoleon occupied that city on the 8th, while the allies withdrew eastward to Bautzen, where they took up a strong position and awaited attack. Napoleon, thinking that they would edge northwards to protect Berlin, had detached Ney to his left. Finding that the allies stood their ground he directed Ney to fall on their rear

<sup>1</sup> Wittgenstein was the official Commander-in-Chief, but of course the allied sovereigns were present and his authority was anything but clearly recognized. Blücher commanded the Prussians with Scharnhorst as Chief of Staff. Bülow had under him the north and east Prussian troops; Blücher's men were mainly the Silesian corps. The Prussian army had been largely rejuvenated and generally renewed, more up-to-date tactics introduced, and the whole system rendered more mobile and flexible. It was commanded throughout by men who were in earnest, and who had shown their mettle in the disasters of 1806: Blücher, Scharnhorst, Gneisenau and Clausewitz.

and right flank while he himself delivered a frontal attack. The allies had been reinforced to 110,000, but to meet them the French had at least 160,000 combatants in the field (20-21 May). The Battle of Bautzen, which was the outcome of these manœuvres, was the great opportunity of the campaign, and had Napoleon's combinations worked out satisfactorily the allied army might have been annihilated. Unfortunately there was a flaw in the combinations; Ney was out of touch with Napoleon, and in face of the superior cavalry of the allies was afraid to press his attack across their line of retreat (19 May, 1813).<sup>1</sup> Once more the allies were defeated, but once more they were able to retire in good order owing largely to Napoleon's lack of cavalry, and the losses were about equal (20,000 each). Napoleon advanced to the Katzbach and the allies withdrew upon Breslau before him. The whole country between the Upper Elbe and the Upper Oder had thus been cleared, but the allies had not been crushed. No such indecisive result could serve Napoleon's purpose. Now, if ever, it was imperative to press matters to a conclusion. The French still enjoyed a distinct, if dwindling, numerical superiority, and a decisive victory, though twice postponed, was by no means improbable. Dissension was rife in the allied camp. Why at this moment Napoleon should have agreed to, even suggested, an armistice is an inexplicable enigma. Nevertheless this is what he did, and on 4 June the Armistice of Plaswitz was signed; it was Napoleon's military and political death-warrant.

What prompted the Emperor to take this fatal step, which he afterwards spoke of as the greatest mistake he had ever made? No doubt he misjudged the attitude of Austria and was unaware of the trouble between the allies; no doubt also he was influenced by public opinion in France, but in the main his decision was based on military considerations. The campaign of Lützen and Bautzen had shown him the weakness of his army; and it was in order to have a better

<sup>1</sup> See Grouard, "Maximes de Guerre," p. 20; Grouard maintains that Napoleon should have detached troops to keep him in touch with Ney; but without cavalry this was exceedingly difficult.

weapon for the prosecution of the war that he agreed to the cessation of hostilities. Not only could he increase the number of his troops—they were actually more than doubled during the two months' truce—but he could, by assiduous training, improve their fighting quality, above all he could remedy to some extent the fatal deficiency of cavalry which had ruined the earlier campaign. On the resumption of hostilities (e.g. at the Battle of Dresden) the cavalry showed marked improvement. Yet the fact remained that if the armistice helped Napoleon it helped the coalition twofold. France was by this time to a great extent exhausted, and even Napoleon could not make bricks without straw—not good bricks at any rate. The resources of Prussia on the other hand were only just beginning to be tapped, and the armistice gave the Prussians just the opportunity that was required for completing their preparations. Above all it gave Austria time to join the coalition.

Napoleon had been quite right in thinking that Austria did not desire immediate war with France. Metternich, who had been careful to maintain relations both with France and with the hostile powers, now laid down the conditions on which his Government was prepared to mediate. These included the extinction of the Grand Duchy of Warsaw and the Confederation of the Rhine, the restoration to Prussia of Dantzic and to Austria of the Illyrian provinces, the independence of the Hanse towns and other French conquests of 1810 in north Germany, and the restoration of Russia to the position she had occupied in 1805. If her mediation was not accepted by 20 July, Austria would declare war on France. (Treaty of Reichenbach, 27 June). The acceptance of these terms would have been an acknowledgment of the failure of Napoleon's schemes for universal sovereignty, and for the coercion of England by a union of Europe under the tyranny of France. In all other respects the terms were eminently favourable to France. But Napoleon could not bring himself to abandon his policy, and he rejected the proffered mediation. Metternich in offering such terms should have known that they would be rejected and that war was inevit-

able. But he too wanted time to get ready and to make his own terms with the allies, of whom, especially of Russia, he was very jealous. On 12 August the armistice came to an end, and France turned to face a coalition which now included Sweden and Austria, in fact all Europe with the single exception of Saxony.<sup>1</sup> What Napoleon had lost by the armistice was now clear. In the spring his armies had been numerically superior to those of the coalition; in the autumn they were inferior; he had 400,000 men immediately available as against 500,000 of the allies.<sup>2</sup> But the disadvantage under which France laboured was progressive; while the French army could hope for but slight reinforcements, the allies could count on an ultimate force of not less than 700,000 men. Clearly, therefore, it was still everything to Napoleon that he should strike at once; and the situation of the allied armies gave him good cause to hope that by a few rapid strokes he might destroy them in detail.

The three hostile armies, the first 250,000 strong in Bohemia under Schwarzenberg,<sup>3</sup> the second 100,000 strong in Silesia under Blücher, and the third 150,000 strong in Brandenburg under Bernadotte, had orders to adopt a general offensive. Schwarzenberg was to penetrate into Saxony and threaten the French communications in the direction of Leipzig, Blücher to push westwards towards the Elbe, and Bernadotte to cross the Elbe near Wittenberg and threaten the French left. The instructions were to retire before superior forces and to attack the enemy when he was inferior: the ultimate object a junction of the three armies and a pitched battle under favourable conditions. At first sight it

<sup>1</sup> Bavaria had not yet declared against Napoleon; she did so after Leipzig.

<sup>2</sup> Russians	.	.	.	184,000
Prussians	.	.	.	157,000
Austrians	.	.	.	127,000
Swedes, etc.	.	.	.	38,000

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506,000

<sup>3</sup> The three monarchs accompanied this army and gravely hampered its operations.

might seem that Napoleon should have been able to thwart these plans easily. He was now firmly established on the Elbe; Ney had been pushed forward with 130,000 men on to the Bober to watch Blücher, Oudinot with 67,000 men was between Wittenberg and Hamburg watching Bernadotte and threatening Berlin, Davout with 38,000 men was at Hamburg, and the strongest force, 170,000 men, under the Emperor himself, was retained at Dresden, ready either to reinforce Ney or to deal with the Army of Bohemia. It has been argued that Napoleon was in possession of interior lines, and that he threw away his advantage by attempting to strike in too many directions,<sup>1</sup> and that in the campaign of 1813 he was sadly beneath his reputation.

There is a certain truth in the argument that Dresden was a bad base. It had been hastily fortified and required 40,000 to 50,000 men to defend it; and it was so far southward that it exposed the French communications to attack by the Army of Bohemia operating from behind the protection of the Bohemian mountains. On the other hand it was an important place and contained a great quantity of military stores—provisions, hospitals, and the like. Still, when Napoleon found that Austria was against him, he would probably have been well advised to abandon Dresden and take Torgau as his base.<sup>2</sup> As to the other criticism, that Napoleon threw away the advantage of interior lines, theoretically it is no doubt justified, but it shows a failure to appreciate the practical conditions of warfare on the grand scale. The destruction of an enemy in detail from interior lines is an operation only possible when the forces engaged are comparatively small and the arena of operations comparatively restricted. Such a process was witnessed in the campaigns of 1796-7, in the first part of that of 1809, and again in 1814 and (in intention) in 1815; in 1813 it was impracticable. The necessary size of the containing forces rendered it impossible

<sup>1</sup> Marmont, "*Mémoires*," op. cit. v. pp. 207, 208.

<sup>2</sup> Napoleon does not seem to have anticipated the considerable reinforcement of the Army of Bohemia by Russia and Prussia, which made it the strongest of the three allied armies.



for them to avoid battle, and they got involved in serious actions (e.g. Macdonald in the Battle of the Katzbach). The superior rapidity necessary for the "interior lines" was lost, owing not only to the size of the forces engaged but also to the extent of the arena of war. There were other conditions, however, which account for Napoleon's failure in 1813: the congested and exhausted state of the theatre of war, the inadequacy of his subordinates as commanders of large bodies of troops, and the impossibility of making his personality felt over so wide an area, the increasingly hostile attitude of the population, the unexpected fighting qualities displayed by some of the units in the allied armies, e.g. by Bülow's troops in the north; add to this the rawness of his own troops and his conspicuous weakness in cavalry and we have a mass of disadvantages against which it is not surprising that even Napoleon's great genius struggled in vain.

Napoleon left Dresden on 15 August, having decided that he would have time to strike a blow at Blücher, who was displaying great activity against Ney in Silesia, before the Bohemian army could seriously menace Dresden. Blücher's cautious tactics,<sup>1</sup> however, thwarted this, and Napoleon was obliged to hurry back to the relief of Dresden before he had made anything of his wary opponent. As soon as the Emperor was gone Blücher turned on Macdonald who had been left in command and inflicted on him the crushing defeat of the Katzbach (26 August). Napoleon found that the allies (225,000 to 250,000 strong) were across the Erzgebirge and threatening Dresden from the west and south. At first he hoped to cut the enemy off from Bohemia by crossing the Elbe in their rear at Königstein, but had to abandon this grand project in order to save Dresden. This he did, winning a splendid victory over superior numbers (26 and 27 August). The Battle of Dresden was one of Napoleon's grandest tactical successes, and he displayed in it all his consummate skill in the use of ground. The enemy was forced to retreat into the mountains. Unfortunately, however, Napoleon, who was seized with a sudden indisposition during the battle, overrated

<sup>1</sup> Blücher was held in check by Gneisenau, his Chief-of-Staff.

the extent of his victory, and also lost touch with his more distant corps. He had detached Vandamme to cut off the beaten army in the mountains ; but he left him without support, and the allies, rallying, practically destroyed this force of nearly 40,000 at Kulm on 30 August. Kulm largely discounted the victory of Dresden and was the turning point of the campaign. This and Macdonald's defeat at the Katzbach were not the only bad news. Napoleon, who laid great store on threatening Berlin and who thoroughly despised Bernadotte's army, had instructed Oudinot in the north to make a forward movement against the Prussian capital. On 23 August, with only 65,000 men, Oudinot had met Bernadotte with 90,000 and had suffered a humiliating reverse at Gross Beeren.<sup>1</sup> Thus the first fifteen days of campaigning had resulted, in spite of the possession of the inner lines, in three defeats against which Napoleon could only set one much discounted victory. He had lost 60,000 men, and the allies had been greatly heartened by their successes.

The Battle of Dresden shows that Napoleon was still dangerous, but there is observable in his September strategy an ominous hesitation. Ney was now sent to replace Oudinot, only to suffer a crushing defeat in his turn at Dennewitz (6 September). Napoleon himself advanced to the assistance of Macdonald, leaving the Bohemian army very far from crushed. Blücher at once resumed the prearranged tactics, and soon, in view of the renewed menace from Bohemia, Napoleon returned to Dresden. His plans had all gone wrong ; the contemplated advance on Berlin had twice failed, and after the Battle of Dennewitz it was not easy to keep the lower Elbe open for supplies ; thus an essential feature in the Emperor's plan of campaign was menaced. He had completely failed to bring Blücher to action ; yet the moment he left him the intrepid old Prussian pressed on the marshals. The Bohemian army remained a fighting unit ; recruits were pouring in to the allies ; the Russian reserve "army of Poland" (50,000 strong)

<sup>1</sup> Only one corps on each side was engaged, and Oudinot showed himself incapable as an army commander. Nor did Bernadotte show up much better.

under Bennigsen, was approaching ; Bavaria was on the point of desertion ; Germany was "up" ; the recruiting energies of France were almost exhausted ; moreover, the moral effects of the Katzbach, Gross Beeren, Kulm, and Dennewitz had almost obliterated the memories of the victory of Dresden.

The moment for decisive action by the allies had arrived. But of the allied commanders Blücher alone appreciated the fact. Bernadotte was afraid of Napoleon and concerned for Sweden and the North ; Schwarzenberg was hesitating, and clung to the end to the old idea of victory by manœuvre rather than by battle. Blücher crossed the Elbe on 4 October, driving Bertrand's corps of Ney's army from that river by a brilliant minor action at Wartenberg. This was the decisive strategic moment of the campaign, for Blücher's passage of the Elbe drew off Napoleon from Bohemia, persuaded Bernadotte to adopt a forward policy, and made possible the concentric movement which ended in Leipzig. Napoleon at once directed the bulk of his forces against Blücher, leaving St. Cyr with 30,000 to 40,000 men at Dresden. Instead of falling back northwards over the Elbe to avoid Napoleon's advance Blücher sidled away westwards towards the Saale, and Napoleon's northward blow glanced off and spent itself in space. It was only on 10 October that the Emperor realized that he had not driven the Prussians back across the Elbe, and on 12 October that he had to deal not only with Blücher but with Bernadotte on the Saale as well. This movement was a very courageous one on the part of the allied commanders, who thus laid Berlin open to attack and at the same time risked their own communications.

Napoleon, secure in his belief that he was able to defeat the allied forces in a great battle, now abandoned the idea, which he had for some time been cherishing, of descending the Elbe and recommencing the campaign from Magdeburg, and began to move upon Leipzig (14 October). His great chance—and one which he fully realized—was to crush Schwarzenberg before Blücher and Bernadotte came up. Already (14 October) a very heavy cavalry engagement had taken place in the hills south of Leipzig, in which Murat,

with seventy-four French squadrons, had barely held his own against Wittgenstein with eighty-four (Battle of Leibertswolkwitz). Two days later the main body of the Bohemian army attacked the French positions south of the city at Wachau, and, thanks to the faulty dispositions of Schwarzenberg, Napoleon had a splendid opportunity of inflicting a great defeat on them; but for some unknown reason he delayed his counter attack and gave the reserves of the Bohemian army time to get up and make a drawn battle of it. This was the last occasion in the War of Liberation on which Napoleon fought his opponents on anything like equal terms. Bennigsen and Collaredo were approaching from Dresden with 63,000 men, and the arrival of Blücher and Bernadotte (the latter a great surprise to Napoleon), who were marching at full speed up the Elster, would bring another 120,000 men into the field and make the odds against the French 295,000 to 160,000.

It was while the Battle of Wachau was at its height that the pressure of Blücher from the north began to make itself felt; this prevented Marmont from taking part in that battle, where his intervention might have been decisive. Instead of this he had to withstand the Prussians at Möckern and after extremely stubborn fighting, in which that village was only stormed by the Prussians at the fifth attempt, was obliged to withdraw on Leipzig. Thus by the evening of the 16th the toils were closing on Napoleon; the two armies of the allies were now in touch and formed a semicircle north-east and south of the city. At Möckern they had held possession of the field; all that remained for the allies to do was to press the French back on Leipzig and cut their communications. On the 17th there was no fighting, and this gave Bernadotte and Bennigsen time to get up, so that on the 18th the entire strength of the allies was engaged. The original idea of the allies had been to form their semicircle west of Leipzig and so block Napoleon's retreat towards France. This plan, which nearly ruined Schwarzenberg on the 16th, was abandoned on the 18th for an eastward semicircle, in order that Bernadotte and Bennigsen, who were approach-

ing from the north-east and south-east respectively, might take part in the final stages. The fighting on the 18th was stubborn in the extreme, and for a time, in spite of superior numbers, the French held their own. Slowly, however, the grip tightened and they fell back on Leipzig. The arrival of Bennigsen in the afternoon made the pressure irresistible. Fortunately for Napoleon the bridge over the Pleisse at Lindenau was still in his hands and across it the survivors of this terrible ordeal struggled painfully away. It was prematurely blown up (on the 19th) and thousands (including Marshal Poniatowski) were drowned in the attempt to swim the River Elster. Macdonald and Lauriston saved their lives by swimming. Thousands surrendered. The Saxons and Rheinbund troops had already deserted;<sup>1</sup> the killed and wounded on the two sides during the four days numbered about 120,000, the allies about 54,000, the French probably 60,000.<sup>2</sup> Blücher urged his colleagues to a great effort to cut off the French retreat, but the troops were exhausted and Schwarzenberg was half-hearted: diplomatic reasons very possibly influenced him in allowing Napoleon time to get away: the Emperor's complete destruction would not have suited Austria. Nevertheless the French had to run the gauntlet of a hostile Germany to the Rhine. Wrede, with 40,000 Bavarians, attacked them (29-31 October) at Hanau and it was only after further severe fighting that the remnant of 70,000 men cut their way through to the Rhine.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> The Saxon contingent which deserted does not seem to have numbered more than 3000 to 4000 men; their desertion, long feared, had some moral effect of course, but did little to influence the result. The incident has been grossly and characteristically exaggerated by French writers.

<sup>2</sup> Not counting the prisoners—some 2-3000—the numbers engaged on the 18th were: Napoleon—160,000 men and 630 guns; allies—295,000 men and 1466 guns.

<sup>3</sup> In the three days' retreat from Leipzig the army lost more men than the Russian army in fifteen days and in a very different country. The quality of the troops, and especially of the lower grades of officers, had fallen off terribly. The hardiness and sobriety of the officers who had shared the fatigues and deprivations of their men had been a great source of strength to the armies of the Revolution and early Empire (see Thoumas, "*Les Transformations de l'armée française*," *op. cit.* i. 52, 53).

Meanwhile the course of affairs in Central Germany had had a great effect on the Peninsula campaign. We left Wellington in the autumn of 1812 checked by the concentration of superior forces against him after his victory at Salamanca. In the spring of 1813 the weakness of the French on and south of the Douro enabled him to take the offensive; but instead of moving on Salamanca, the centre of their line, he transferred his army to the northward, passed the Douro, appeared on the French right, and so turned their flank. The French, harassed in every direction by the Spanish irregulars, had weakened their main army by the detachment of considerable forces to hunt down the "guerillas". The result was that Wellington's unexpected turning movement was a complete success. By continually pressing the French right flank he edged them back from the Douro past Burgos and over the Ebro. Repeating his movement, he turned their right once more by passing the upper Ebro, and then rounded on the flank of the position they took up at Vittoria (21 June, 1813). Here, with a superiority of 80,000 to 65,000 he attacked them in front and on both flanks, cutting them off from their proper line of retreat on Bayonne, and forcing them to retire along the Pampeluna road, a mere mountain track. Their whole artillery and baggage was abandoned, and they reached Pampeluna utterly disordered and without the means of offering further resistance to Wellington's victorious army. On 26 June they crossed the frontier and were unable to rally before they had reached Bayonne.

Wellington remained in Spain, hunting the detached French forces and besieging Pampeluna and San Sebastian, while Napoleon dispatched Soult to repair these disasters. Suchet, who had been moderately successful against Sir John Murray in Valencia and Catalonia, felt the full effect of Vittoria and the French efforts in that quarter gradually died out. On 23 July, 1813, Soult, who had about 85,000 men, advanced into the Pyrenees in the hope of taking the scattered English forces by surprise. The obstinate and brilliant resistance offered to his obstinate and brilliant

attacks in the "Battles of the Pyrenees," however, ruined the morale of his army and compelled him to fall back into France.

In October, at the time when Napoleon was being drawn to his destruction at Leipzig, Wellington at last advanced over the frontier, forced the Bidassoa, and in November, after very serious fighting, carried the very strong lines of the Nivelle. On 9 December he effected the passage of the Nive. Soult twice attempted to crush the allies, divided by that river, in detail. In the second attempt (Battle of Saint Pierre) Sir Rowland Hill repulsed a large part of his army with two divisions only. Partly by the losses in these battles of the Nive, partly by the drain for the European war, Soult's army was now reduced to 50,000 men, and on 26 February, 1814, he was obliged to abandon Bayonne. On 27 February, however, he attempted to defend the heights of Orthez against the allies, but was forced to continue his retreat. Nothing could now avail; Napoleon was himself fighting for his life in Eastern France. Wellington followed Soult to Toulouse, where the indomitable marshal once more faced the enemy. He was driven from his entrenchments in front of the town, but only after a desperate action in which the allied losses exceeded those of the French. On 12 April he evacuated Toulouse. Thus ended the Peninsula War, for on 6 April Napoleon had signed his abdication.<sup>1</sup>

We must now turn back to review the winter of 1813-4 to see the course of events which led from the Battle of Leipzig to the abdication of Napoleon. The Emperor's position after the Battle of Leipzig was apparently desperate; his military prestige had crumbled away, the tributary states were slipping from his grasp, the Empire was breaking up, while France herself was in the last stage of exhaustion. The Exchequer was empty. Taxes, increase them as he might, would no longer yield. The *rentes* dropped to 50. The hoard in the Tuileries was the last resource and this quickly went. There was an ominous dearth of recruiting

<sup>1</sup> The Battles of Craonne and Laon were in March: *infra*, p. 216.

material and of the necessities of war, especially of muskets.<sup>1</sup> In order to end the Spanish struggle and make Soult's troops available for the main campaign Napoleon now decided to restore Ferdinand VII. Talleyrand, whose treasonable intrigues should long since have brought about his fall, persuaded his master to submit this decision to the Spanish *Cortes*. He had already arranged for its rejection in this quarter; and with this rejection ended the hope of peace with England. Nevertheless the position was not quite so desperate as it seemed: there was something, at any rate, on the other side of the account. In the first place—and most important of all—there was Napoleon's own remarkable recuperative power. However much he had belied his own reputation in 1813 when he seemed to hold the winning cards, in 1814, when everything had turned against him, he was once more at his best. There is nothing finer in all his military career than the great struggle between genius and numbers which now ensued. He was hardly exaggerating when he wrote in the spring of 1814 that he was still "as good a man as he had been at Marengo and Wagram". Never had he more completely thrown off the politician for the soldier,<sup>2</sup> and in these months his wonderful military genius was allowed to operate almost uninfluenced by political considerations. This revival of the general in him was the first and most valuable point in his favour.<sup>3</sup> Again,

<sup>1</sup> See "Correspondance de Napoléon," op. cit. xxvi. 428, 429: "Les fusils sont rares"; *ibid.* 467: "Il est difficile d'être plus mal en fusils que nous ne sommes"; and xxvii. 3: "La grande affaire sera les fusils".

<sup>2</sup> Indeed it may be said that the politician was too far suppressed in favour of the soldier. In the negotiations with the allies at Frankfort and Châtillon Napoleon seemed to have lost his political balance.

<sup>3</sup> With this return of his military touch there was also a return of the old self-confidence. At no period of his career did Napoleon strike his blows with greater precision and self-possession than in 1814. When things were looking their blackest he writes to Rovigo (Savary): "Vos alarmes et votre peur à Paris me font rire. . . . Partez du principal que mon infanterie mon artillerie et même ma grosse cavalerie ont une telle supériorité que je ne crains rien. Je battrai l'ennemi plus vite que vous ne croyez" ("Correspondance," op. cit. xxvi. 402).



he could reckon on the effect of invasion on the populace in France. Stung by the insult as much as by the material suffering of invasion, there was no doubt as to the attitude of the nation ; it would be at his back. For, in spite of all the suffering he had caused her, in spite of her exhaustion, the mass of the nation remained unreservedly loyal to the man who more than any other embodied her national characteristics. Even in defeat she would adhere to Napoleon as long as it was possible to do so.

On the other hand the allies, triumphant as they were and overwhelmingly superior in numbers, had grave difficulties to contend with. They were not at one as to how far the attack upon Napoleon should be pressed : Austria in particular was hanging back. Nor were they agreed as to the form of government which should be introduced in France : Austria and Prussia, on the whole, favoured the restoration of the Bourbons, while Alexander, with his more liberal views, was willing to be guided by French public opinion. And if the political relations of the allies were not harmonious, neither were their military relations so. No two commanders were less likely to co-operate successfully than the tortoise-like Schwarzenberg<sup>1</sup> and the impetuous Blücher. Napoleon was not slow to discover and take advantage of the dilatoriness of the one and the impetuosity of the other.

After the victory of Leipzig, the allied sovereigns proceeded to Frankfort whence the clamour of their discordant views resounded, with the result that terms of an extremely favourable nature, considering the circumstances, were offered by the victors to the vanquished. The Frankfort offer (November, 1813) was practically the limits of 1797.<sup>2</sup> As a simple politician Napoleon would have been wise to agree—a few months later he was standing out for the terms he now refused—but he would have been untrue to his ideals had he done so. All his life glory had been his goal. It was this that had made him the incarnation of the spirit of France ;

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon's prestige, once shown to be still a living force, soon regained its paralysing effect on Schwarzenberg.

<sup>2</sup> I.e. Belgium, and the left bank of the Rhine, with Nice and Savoy.

and it is difficult to say that he would have been right to abandon it without striking a blow. Moreover, the general in him being now uppermost, he believed that his military genius was equal to defeating the allies, as indeed it all but proved to be. The campaign of 1814 against overwhelming odds was the most glorious of his career. It is impossible to say that he was wrong to fight it. With some hesitation he declined to accept the terms of Frankfort, though when it was too late to go back he seems to have regretted his decision.<sup>1</sup> The allies at this moment could reckon on a force of more than 600,000 men, of whom some 220,000 were utilized for the main invasion of France; Wellington had about 80,000 to deal with Soult; Bernadotte had nearly 100,000 in Belgium;<sup>2</sup> the Austro-Italian army numbered 55,000, while about 100,000 were in reserve. Against these Napoleon was able to set no more than 110,000 men (reserves and depots included), so that the odds against him were enormous.<sup>3</sup>

Between 21 December and 1 January the allies crossed the Rhine between Coblenz and Basle and began their advance into France, the main army under Schwarzenberg reaching the plain of Langres on 14 January, while on the 22nd Blücher was over the Meuse and on the 24th Schwarzenberg reached the Aube. It was unfortunate that Napoleon had not been able to meet the early stages of the advance.

<sup>1</sup> "Correspondance," op. cit. xxvii. 18: "Do they want to reduce France to her ancient limits? That would humiliate her. *Il n'est pas un cœur français, qui n'en sentit pas l'opprobre au bout de six mois et qui ne le reprochât au gouvernement assez lâche pour le signer*" (this was probably true). "Italy is intact. The Viceroy has a fine army. Before eight days I shall have got together troops enough for several battles. . . . The devastations of the Cossacks will arm the inhabitants and double my strength. If the nation seconds me, the enemy marches to his destruction. If fortune deserts me my course is decided. I don't cling to the throne. I will not abase myself or the nation by accepting dishonourable conditions" (see also "Correspondance," op. cit. xxvii. 10, and xxvi. 480).

<sup>2</sup> The wanderings of Bernadotte's army are most complicated. Some besieged fortresses, some campaigned against the Danes, some went to Holland—a long and tiresome story—Bernadotte's tortuous policy and his conceit fettered the energies of the Army of the North in 1814 as in 1813.

<sup>3</sup> For Napoleon's recruiting orders see letter to Clarke of 10 November, 1813 ("Correspondance," op. cit. xxvi. 414).

It was on the lines of the Meuse and Saône, and while the two allied armies were still widely separated, that the French might have struck with success, but the men were lacking. By the time Napoleon got to the front Blücher and Schwarzenberg were practically in touch, and the valleys of the Marne, Seine, and Aube afforded direct access to Paris. Napoleon attacked Blücher at Brienne on the 29th; and the latter fell back on Schwarzenberg. On 1 February Blücher turned on Napoleon at la Rothière and with the help of Schwarzenberg defeated him after an eight hours' battle in which the odds were three to one against the French.

The allies were immensely elated at this success and looked forward to a military promenade to Paris.<sup>1</sup> Public opinion in France was correspondingly depressed. The funds sank to 47, and everywhere the feeling was that the game was up. The Emperor alone kept his head. All that had been proved at la Rothière was that he was not a match for the combined forces of the enemy; but could he not beat them in detail? The allies played into his hands when they decided to make the advance on Paris in two columns, Schwarzenberg by the Seine and Blücher by the Marne. Schwarzenberg dragged himself slowly as far as Troyes, Napoleon evacuating that city in front of him, while Blücher dashed forward along the Marne with his usual impetuosity, and thereby afforded Napoleon the opportunity for which he was looking. Leaving Victor and Oudinot at Nogent to retain Schwarzenberg, he fell upon Blücher's detached columns and cut his army in two, and in four successive encounters<sup>2</sup> defeated them in detail, at a cost to them of 16,000 men. During these critical days the Army of Bohemia had hardly lifted a finger to assist Blücher. Political had got the upper hand of military considerations, and the coalition seemed on the point of breaking up. Castlereagh's arrival in the allied camp, however, persuaded Austria to continue hostilities, but only on condition that negotiations with Napoleon were re-

<sup>1</sup> Blücher declared that he would be there in eight days.

<sup>2</sup> Champaubert, 10 February; Montmirail, 11 February; Château Thierry, 12 February; Vauchamps, 14 February.

newed. So on 5 February a conference met at Châtillon-sur-Seine. This was at the moment when Napoleon's fortunes were at their lowest, before his successes against Blücher; he would probably have accepted the Frankfort terms,<sup>1</sup> but he absolutely refused to consider the "boundaries of 1791," which was the proposal now made by the allies. His successes confirmed him in his refusal; and from 9 to 17 February there was a suspension of the Congress.

Napoleon's chief object should have been to annihilate Blücher once for all; this he thought he had accomplished and he now turned his attention to the Grand Army (Schwarzenberg's force). Schwarzenberg had been pushing forward in his absence, and was now almost within striking distance of Paris,<sup>2</sup> and Napoleon (the political interfering with the judgment of the military man in him) had omitted to fortify Paris;<sup>3</sup> he was therefore obliged to abandon the pursuit of Blücher, leaving Marmont's corps to watch him, and to try upon the Seine the plan that had been so successful upon the Marne. Sweeping round (15 February) by Meaux, Guignes, and Nangis he appeared on the right flank of Schwarzenberg's advancing columns. The Congress which had resumed its sittings made a final effort to terminate hostilities; Austria in fact desired to withdraw from the war, but the utmost Alexander would consent to was a renewed offer of the boundaries of 1791. The proposals which he had rejected at the nadir of his fortunes (i.e. after la Rothière) it was not likely that Napoleon would accept now that his star was once more in the ascendant. He refused the terms; he refused an armistice, and sent Victor in to seize the passage of the Seine at Montereau on Schwarzenberg's flank. Victor was not quite quick enough, and Napoleon's fine conception only partially succeeded, but the enemy were driven back upon Troyes. Napoleon now made a strategical mistake; by

<sup>1</sup> See letter quoted above, dated 4 January, 1814, in instructions to Caulaincourt. Without Antwerp and Mainz France would be a second-rate power.

<sup>2</sup> His cavalry had actually reached Melun and Fontainebleau.

<sup>3</sup> Public feeling was dead against such a project until 1813. But Napoleon had run up a lot of temporary works after Leipzig.

adopting for his pursuit the left bank of the Seine he partially abandoned the inner lines which had stood him in such good stead ; by doing so he ceased to act as a wedge between Blücher and Schwarzenberg. The truth was that he had under-rated (and not for the first or last time in his life) the astonishing recuperative power of the old Prussian Field-Marshal. Even after the series of defeats he had experienced, Blücher remained by far the most dangerous of Napoleon's enemies ; the more so that he was on the point of being strongly reinforced. Napoleon counted on Schwarzenberg standing in front of Troyes. If this had happened he would have had time to deal with him before the Prussians could come to his assistance. But Schwarzenberg decided to withdraw, and by this unheroic decision turned the fortunes of the campaign.<sup>1</sup> He fell back with his 120,000 men behind the Aube and towards his original position in the plain of Langres. Napoleon seized Troyes and established his 74,000 men between the Seine and the Aube. Blücher withdrew with his 48,000 to the Marne Valley once more, there to unite with the Army of the North and move on Paris.

By his marvellous energy and admirable use of the inner lines Napoleon had scored a wonderful triumph for genius over numbers ; he had, it is true, been greatly aided by the enemy's faulty plan of campaign, by the divided counsels of the diplomats, and by the divergent temperaments of the two allied commanders ; nevertheless the campaign of February, 1814, saw him at his best. The Congress of Châtillon had by this time completely broken down,<sup>2</sup> and the coalition was once more drawn together by the Treaty of Chaumont, by which the four powers agreed not to treat separately, England promising increased subsidies and Russia, Austria and Prussia undertaking to keep each 100,000 men in the field. The Treaty of Chaumont was signed 1 March, 1814, by Metternich, Nesselrode, Castlereagh, and Hardenberg ; this was the first real cementing of the alliance and meant a complete change

<sup>1</sup> He believed himself to be threatened in rear by Augereau from the Saône.

<sup>2</sup> It did not actually close till 11 March.

in the cohesive quality of it. The great powers took charge of Europe.

Alexander had been much disgusted at the retrograde movement on Langres, and had insisted that Blücher should be reinforced and accorded freedom of action. The corps of Winzingerode and Bülow, which had completely driven the French out of Holland and partially out of Belgium, were ordered to the Marne, and Blücher began the second advance on Paris. This drew Napoleon from the Aube and, leaving Oudinot with 40,000 men to contain the Army of Bohemia, he himself marched against Blücher. On 27 February Schwarzenberg advanced against Oudinot at Bar-sur-Aube and owing to the latter's faulty dispositions—his artillery was completely out of action—inflicted on him a severe reverse, which resulted in the recovery of Troyes for the allies. Meanwhile Blücher's retreat had been delayed by Marmont and Mortier, and he had been frustrated in his attempts to cross the little River Ourcq (a northern tributary of the Marne). With Napoleon thundering up in its rear the Army of Silesia was in a very critical position and nothing remained for it but to hurry northward to the Aisne to meet the expected reinforcements.<sup>1</sup> This it did, and on 3 March was joined north of the Aisne by Bülow and Winzingerode. Blücher had now a force of 100,000 men and was in a position to resume the offensive. The tables had been completely turned on Napoleon. Blücher's army now began to concentrate itself at Laon, an extremely strong position; Napoleon swinging to his right, crossed the Aisne at Berry-au-Bac and advanced against him.

Twenty thousand Russians held the plateau of Craonne (between Berry and Laon) against the French army for a day (7 March), while the concentration at Laon was being effected. Napoleon then dashed his little army with reckless daring against this immensely strong position; he should have been annihilated, and after two days' fighting (9 and 10 March) and

<sup>1</sup> French critics attribute Napoleon's failure to the surrender of Soissons. But recent criticism has shown that Blücher had sufficient means of crossing the Aisne without the bridge of Soissons.

severe losses he was obliged to withdraw. On his way south, to show how little he cared, he snapped at Reims and took it. He now determined to show himself on the Seine and Aube in order to remind Schwarzenberg of his continued existence. The "great irresolute," however, displayed a sudden access of resolution. When he saw that Napoleon was crossing the Aube at Arcis he ordered an advance against him. Napoleon was completely taken by surprise; he had not credited Schwarzenberg with such determination. Nevertheless on 20 March the splendid tenacity of the French infantry and the Emperor's personal gallantry staved off defeat, and on the following day he was able to extricate his main body while the enemy looked on; for Schwarzenberg's resolution was not equal to the strain of continuing the offensive.

It was now clear that Napoleon, even with his superior military genius, had not forces sufficient to face either of the allied armies in a pitched battle. Moreover, on 12 March Bordeaux had revolted against his Government and surrendered to the English. The Emperor withdrew eastwards to Saint Dizier to fall upon the enemy's communications. For a moment the allies thought of retreating to the Rhine, but bolder councils prevailed and a junction between the two armies was arranged, and enabled them to march upon Paris. Marmont and Mortier on their way from the Aisne fell in with the allies during their concentration in the neighbourhood at La Fère Champenoise and were very severely handled. This cleared the way to Paris and 180,000 men advanced down the Marne upon the capital.

The city itself was practically defenceless in spite of its fine position. And if there was a lack of fortifications, there was a lack of garrison also, for the National Guard had not been called out till it was too late, and in its untrained state was practically worthless. Worse than this both the arsenals and the Treasury were empty. Worst of all there was no leader with any initiative or energy. Marie Louise was a foreigner; King Joseph, who had been made Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom in Napoleon's absence, was an amiable, but not a resolute person; Cambacérès, the Arch-

Chancellor, was a philosopher ; Clarke, the Minister for War, a mediocrity ; Montalivet a nonentity and Rovigo (Savary) a dupe. The "man of his hands" was lacking. The man of brains was working for the enemy : Talleyrand, whose transcendent ability had persuaded Napoleon to go on making use of him long after his disaffection was patent, remained Vice-Grand-Elector of the Empire. His position ever since the Conference of Erfurt had been equivocal. Endowed as he was with a conveniently flexible standard of honour we may yet credit him with a genuine belief that the downfall of Napoleon would be for the advantage of France. His own advancement to a position where his intellect would have full play he regarded as even more advantageous to her. And it now fell to him to minister to the dying moments of the Empire. His first object was the removal—if possible the death—of Napoleon. If this could be accomplished, a regency of Marie Louise, in which he could secure the leading rôle, would suit his purpose admirably.<sup>1</sup> The restoration of the Bourbons did not commend itself to him unless the other solution was impossible, when he would accept it as a *pis aller*.

Unfortunately for Talleyrand, Napoleon sent instructions to Paris for the removal of the Empress and the King of Rome. Their departure for Blois on 29 March had a very bad effect in the capital, and was the first of the events which ultimately drove Talleyrand into the arms of the Royalists. Marmont and Mortier, who had fallen back on Paris in front of the allies, made preparations for the defence of the city. The allies, who were extremely nervous lest Napoleon should fall on their rear, had determined to attack the northern side of the city under cover of the Marne, and the final contest resolved itself into a struggle for Montmartre and the north-eastern plateau which protects Paris on that side. The fighting on 30 March was not decisive, and the raw French troops, splendidly led by Marmont and Mortier, displayed great courage and enthusiasm. With a little constancy and inspiration from their leaders they might still have extracted

<sup>1</sup> It is well known that Talleyrand had long been receiving Austrian money and Marie Louise would have suited Austria.



favourable terms. But Joseph had no stomach for extreme measures and feared responsibility. He therefore gave the still undefeated marshals full powers to treat and himself rode away towards the Loire. Marmont, who shares with Talleyrand the ignominy of these days, agreed to the evacuation of Paris. On 31 March the allies entered the capital, where they were received with curiosity and a respect which was justified by Alexander's magnanimous behaviour and his determination to spare the city.

Napoleon meanwhile, his raid on the communications having failed, had been hurrying at breakneck speed towards Paris. He had actually passed Fontainebleau when the news of the capitulation reached him. Even this intelligence did not daunt him and he determined to march for the capital. So long as the army remained faithful his case, though critical, was not hopeless, and so far as the rank and file were concerned they would have marched anywhere with him. It was otherwise with the Marshals, Berthier, Ney, Macdonald; utterly disillusioned, with no taste for leading handfuls of raw troops on desperate errands, they despaired of their master's cause and were looking anxiously to the future; they dissuaded Napoleon from his project and forced him to sign an abdication in favour of the King of Rome. Such an arrangement might suit the marshals but it no longer suited Talleyrand, in whose hotel the Czar had established himself, and who was now determined to make himself the instrument of a Bourbon restoration. Talleyrand had won over Marmont to his interests. Of all the marshals, Marmont was the one with whom Napoleon was most intimate, yet for him was reserved the rôle of Judas. Worked upon by Talleyrand, he agreed to withdraw his troops into Normandy, on condition that Napoleon's person was respected. Thus while Macdonald, Ney, and the others abandoned the Emperor, Marmont betrayed the imperial dynasty; for once the military menace disappeared (as it did with the disappearance of Marmont's troops) the allies would not consider Napoleon's proposals for a regency. A week later (13 April), the Emperor was obliged to ratify the Treaty of Fontaine-

bleau which relegated him to the Island of Elba, with full sovereign rights, and the Empress to Parma, with Piacenza and Guastalla and similar rights. There is some evidence, by no means conclusive, that, before accepting this settlement, Napoleon unsuccessfully tried to poison himself. Such an attempt was quite foreign to all that is known of his temperament and character and the story may well be discredited. On 20 April he left Fontainebleau under an escort provided by the allies, and on 4 May reached his new kingdom. Thus the spell which Bonaparte had cast over France was suspended. How it came about that it was not completely broken, how he was able to renew it, and how it was more thoroughly established, falls to be recounted in the next chapter. So potent was it that it revived after his death and was only finally dissipated by the inadequacy of his nephew in 1871.

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## CHAPTER XXXIV

### THE FIRST RESTORATION AND THE HUNDRED DAYS

THE only settlement that was now possible was the restoration of the Bourbons. A Bonapartist regency was altogether too dangerous, the idea to which Alexander had at first inclined of establishing Bernadotte on the throne had been scouted by Talleyrand, Republicanism had been too greatly discredited at the hands of Robespierre's protégé; it was, moreover, most unpalatable to the allies: so, utterly weary of war, the best public opinion in France turned to the idea of constitutional monarchy under the Bourbons as the only settlement that was likely to bring peace. The allied powers themselves, with whom the final decision lay, were moreover prejudiced in favour of this solution. Legitimacy, the maintenance of the old forms of government and the old dynasties, had been the keynote of their policy; they therefore acquiesced in the Bourbon restoration. Thus after a quarter of a century of turmoil France reverted to the ideals of the men of 1789 though with less prospect of their successful realization, for the Bourbons of 1815 were not so favourably disposed to limitations of their powers as Louis XVI had been.

It was unfortunate that the influence of the Comte d'Artois, who had been accorded a vociferous welcome by the Royalists when he entered Paris on 12 April as his brother's lieutenant, had decided Louis XVIII, who was not himself a convinced reactionary, to identify himself with the more bigoted section of the monarchists. The Senate on 6 April had offered the crown to Louis on condition that he accepted a Constitution

which they had drawn up. In itself the document was a reasonable one. It gave the King control of the Executive, and divided the legislative power between King, Senate, and Popular Assembly, while it established the principle of responsibility; taxation by consent, universal suffrage and plebiscite being retained. Unfortunately the Constitution was largely discredited by the inclusion of a provision for the maintenance in the new Senate of all the existing Senators, and also for the maintenance of the existing *Corps Législatif*. Taking advantage of the resentment provoked by this attempt at usurpation Louis brushed the Constitution on one side, and on 3 May entered the capital with the promise of a liberal constitution indeed but without having accepted any conditions. He was accorded a somewhat mixed reception. But alone of all parties the Royalists had a cry left in them. It was not indeed a moment for party, and the fact that the Royalists remained a party helps to show that patriotism was alien to them.

Louis XVIII was now sixty years of age; but his great corpulence and tendency to gout made him seem older. That a man who was physically incapable of mounting a horse should step into the place of the iron warrior who had scoured Europe from end to end was a descent from the sublime almost to the ridiculous, a descent to which the France that had experienced all the glorious emotions of the last twenty years would assuredly not long submit. For the moment, however, physical incapacity in her ruler may well have been greeted by the country as an assurance of much-needed rest. Louis was a suave and intelligent but indolent man, not wedded to absolutist, still less to reactionary, ideas, too easy-going perhaps to be wedded to any ideas, but acquiescing for the moment in the bigoted policy which was the stock in trade of Artois and his circle. That policy presented the Bourbons in the most unfavourable light, as men who "had learnt nothing and forgotten nothing," had merely nursed their grievances, hugged their absolutist ideas, and become more and more embittered towards everything that had happened in France since the downfall

of the dynasty. This idiotic pretence that nothing had transpired in France save twenty-five years, this attempt to blot out a whole epoch—and such an epoch—shared the fate of all assaults on historical continuity. The restoration of a monarchy imbued, or seeming to be imbued, with such ideas was foredoomed to failure. The charter proffered by the Senate had been rejected in order that the restoration might be accomplished not by bargain with the people but by the automatic action of divine right. The first concern, therefore, was to present a constitution or charter which should come not from below but from above; and on 4 June the fourth great Constitution of France was proclaimed. Its main provisions are enumerated below.<sup>1</sup> It was, on the whole, an imitation of the English Constitution though it reserved greater powers to the King than were reserved in England. The high qualification for deputies and electors was dangerously plutocratic and led on to that middle-class regime which overthrew the Bourbons. What gave most offence at the time, however, was the *ancien régime* form of the document, and the “given at Paris in the year of Grace, 1814, and in the 19th year of our reign” with which it concluded. In this petty regard for form the hand of Artois is visible.

<sup>1</sup> Constitution of 4 June, 1814 (Hélie, op. cit. pp. 884-99). The Constitution opened with a Declaration of Rights, which included equality before the law, taxation in proportion to fortune, equality in eligibility for office, guarantees of individual liberty and of (qualified) liberty of press and speech, of liberty of religion (Catholicism being retained as the State religion), of inviolability of property (including national property), and, most welcome of all, abolition of the hated conscription. Full executive powers were reserved to the King; legislative powers were distributed between the King and two chambers; house of peers and house of deputies. The right to initiate legislation was reserved to the King. The peers were appointed by the King either for life or with hereditary descent. Their debates were private. The deputies were chosen by electoral colleges in the departments; they had to be forty years old, and payment of the large sum of 1,000 francs in direct taxation was the property qualification; the qualification of electors was 300 francs. The King had the right to prorogue and convoke the Assembly. Ministers could be members of either chamber and were responsible for their acts. The Legion of Honour was maintained. The Civil List was to be voted for life.

But it was not the Constitution that set the restored monarchy on the down grade so much as the Treaty of Paris to which the King set his name on 30 April. In this case the Bourbons had the thankless task of footing Napoleon's bill. The treaty was not published till 4 June, but it had really been anticipated by Talleyrand's Armistice on 23 April between Napoleon's departure and Louis XVIII's arrival. Talleyrand simply gave away everything—fortresses, war-material, food-stuffs; this armistice implied a humiliating peace. The nation which had risen to such a pitch of glory under the Empire saw itself humbled to the dust as the first consequence, so it seemed, of the Restoration. For Europe, to an even greater degree than the Bourbons, was determined to wipe the Napoleonic era off the slate. A few minor concessions indeed there were; the stolen art-treasures were allowed to remain in Paris; the idea of a war indemnity to Prussia was abandoned; but France was stripped of all her conquests and her frontiers narrowed to the limits of 1 November, 1792, in other words the *ancien régime* frontier; so that with the Napoleonic vanished the revolutionary era; 150 geographical miles round Chambéry and Annécý together with Avignon and Montbéliard was all that was saved from the wreckage;<sup>1</sup> England retained her West Indian conquests, but Portugal restored French Guiana to France.

This treaty was the first and largest nail in the Bourbon coffin. The new government had affronted, as it was bound to affront, the self-respect of the nation, lowered the standard of glory which had risen to such heights in the Napoleonic era. The question was whether by wise administration, reasonable policy, and good sense in high places it might not, in spite of this, commend itself to the majority of moderate citizens. Unfortunately it was ill-fitted to do so. The government, in fact, was an inert body with no head. Louis himself, though neither stupid nor malevolent, was unused to business and "treated the throne as a good arm-chair". His ministers (Talleyrand, de Blacas, Montesquieu, Ferrand, Dam-

<sup>1</sup> There was also a slight rectification of frontier on the middle Rhine, the boundary following the middle stream.

bray, and Dupont) had no cohesion and no real leader ; for Talleyrand, great genius though he was, was a foreign minister pure and simple, and was soon to leave the kingdom on an errand of European importance. As for the royal family, Artois was a mere logical bigot, the evil genius of the Bourbons, his son Charles, Duc de Berry, was spirited but violent and irascible, Orleans (son of Philippe Égalité) was a liberal and stood aloof, the Duchesse d'Angoulême (daughter of Louis XVI) was soured by her captivity.

Under these circumstances it was hardly surprising that the Government should make a series of clumsy errors of tact which were more fatal to it than any misdirection of principle. It was madness, for instance, on Louis' part, and showed his utter misapprehension of the French character, to attempt to impose English sabbatarianism on that light-hearted nation ; unwise to irritate the Bonapartist army by the reintroduction of the white cockade, the revival of the household troops, and the wholesale promotion of *émigrés*. Henry IV would never have slighted the Legion of Honour as Louis did ; nor would he have stirred the embers as Louis did by fêtes in honour of the royalist agent and "martyr" Georges Cadoudal, nor by the public transference of the remains of Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette to Saint-Denis, nor by fulsome expressions of gratitude to England, the home of his exile. More dangerous still was the attitude of the new Government to the royalist *émigrés*. These had returned in the train of the Bourbons and were now clamouring for their reward. By the charter they were excluded from such of their ancient properties as had been sold, and it thus became necessary to make other provision for them. Pensions and offices were found for them, and indirect taxes (*droits réunis* as they were called) were imposed in order to raise the necessary funds ; this provoked widespread discontent. More fatal than any of those *gaucheries*, however, was the growing feeling that the Bourbons did not intend to respect their own charter. The introduction of measures for the censorship of the press, the insistence on public homage to the processions of the *Fête Dieu*, the restoration to the *émigrés* of unsold property—all



these were infractions of the spirit of the charter and gave colour to the suspicion of bad faith. A powerful constitutional opposition came into being, the leaders of which were Lafayette, Benjamin Constant, and Mme. de Staël. By the close of the year the unpopularity of the Government was extreme. The introduction into the ministry of Soult, the most *intrigant* of Napoleon's marshals, only served to add fuel to the flame. Soult's brutal energy in his new master's cause culminated in a violent attack on General Excelmans, who had written an indiscreet letter to the King of Naples. The marshal's tactless violence towards this inconspicuous offender made Excelmans a popular hero and greatly incensed public opinion. Fouché, the greatest of all opportunists, began to see which way the wind was blowing. He had been ignored in the formation of the new Government, and now began to weave intrigues and to plan the overthrow of the Bourbons.

It should not be thought that France at this moment was mistress of her own fate. Her position was under discussion during the whole of the autumn and winter of 1814-15 at Vienna where the great Congress, which was to round off the Treaty of Paris and give a proper equilibrium to the European powers, had assembled. The Congress has an importance which extends far beyond the confines of French history. It was the beginning of a great attempt to put the forces of Europe in commission, to preserve peace and maintain poise by the corporate action of the powers, and it was intended that this should become the normal method; it was thus, in intention at least, the opening of a new era. But it is only those passages that directly apply to France in the story of the Congress that can concern us here. Talleyrand was sent to Vienna as plenipotentiary, and played his part with enormous sang-froid, courage, and cleverness. It was very soon found that in spite of the talk about concerted action there were divergent interests which would make such action extremely difficult. Russia, for instance, by reason of the ascendancy of Alexander and her preponderant share in the downfall of Napoleon, would hardly be content if she might not absorb the Grand Duchy of Warsaw. This in turn involved westward

compensation for Prussia, and at once the question of the absorption of Saxony by Prussia was thrown into the arena. Austria again was ready enough to drop the Netherlands and even her Swabian possessions provided she could regain her foothold in Venice and Lombardy. Prussia, desiring Saxony, was willing to abandon her Polish possessions; but the position was compromised by the impossibility of handing Hanover to her; thus her extension westwards could not be continuous. Into this troubled arena entered the ex-prince of Benevento. Talleyrand was quick to see these divergencies, and under his direction France gradually began to resume her traditional rôle of protector of the smaller German powers, chief amongst which was Saxony. Very soon, thanks to the ingenuity of her plenipotentiary, France was exercising an influence on the Congress quite as great as that of any of the other powers; and on 3 January she became a party, with England and Austria, to a secret defensive Triple Alliance, which was directed against the aspirations of Russia and Prussia. That the powers who met in order to make war impossible in the future should fly at each other's throats in such a way as was thus suggested was unthinkable, and Metternich, whose struggle with Alexander was the personal feature of the Congress, agreed to compromise, while Alexander consented to sacrifice his Polish ambitions. The Grand Duchy was therefore distributed between Russia, Austria, and Prussia; and Saxony was left standing though nearly half of her possessions passed to Prussia. In Italy, Venice and Lombardy were restored to Austria who became once more the dominating power. Murat was suffered to remain in Naples.

The Congress was wading its way through a morass of divergent schemes for a Germanic constitution when an event occurred which suspended their labours. To follow this we must return to France and to Elba. The unpopularity of the Bourbons was fast increasing; it had taken very few months to make France regret the Restoration. No one was better aware of this than the imperial exile at Elba. Nothing in his whole career is a more signal proof of his wonderful political judgment than his unerring selection of the right moment for his return. He left Elba on

26 February, landed in the Golfe de Jouan on 1 March, and reached Lyons by way of Dauphiné on the 10th, Auxerre on the 17th, and Fontainebleau on the 20th. His progress, after the first critical moments, was one long personal triumph. Regiment after regiment deserted the King and hailed the Emperor, adhesion after adhesion poured in, the most remarkable being that of Ney, who had just before promised to bring Bonaparte to Paris in an iron cage.<sup>1</sup> On the night of 19 March Louis XVIII left the Tuileries for the Belgian frontier; all the following night an expectant crowd lingered round the palace; in the silence of the early morning the gallop of horses and the rumbling of wheels was heard; a swaying carriage surrounded by lancers swung through the streets to the palace entrance; torches sputtered in the drizzle and lit up the olive face and now ponderous frame of Napoleon. The Emperor had returned to his capital.

Napoleon had not waited for this to begin the business of government. Already from Lyons he had begun to issue his decrees. He had summoned an Assembly for the revision of the Constitution, had expelled the returned *émigrés* of 1814, had abolished the old nobility, exiled Talleyrand, Marmont, and Angereau, and disbanded the royal guard and household troops. In Paris he immediately set to work to construct a ministry, and, though many of his old servants had permanently deserted, many returned. Maret resumed the secretariat of state, Davout took the war portfolio, Decrès the naval, Cambacérès went to the ministry of justice, Gaudin to the Treasury, Mollien undertook the finance department, that indispensable traitor Fouché resumed the administration of the police, Carnot, Republican though he was, went to the Interior. But perhaps the most remarkable adhesion was that of Benjamin Constant, a conspicuous adherent of the constitutional monarchy. He was entirely won over by the personality of the Emperor, and made himself responsible to a great extent for the drafting of the new Constitution.

At first Constant advocated the introduction of a wholly new constitution, but Napoleon overrode this suggestion, and

<sup>1</sup> Ney, however, only joined the Emperor just in time for the Battle of les Quatre Bras.

on 22 April the alterations were introduced in an "Acte Additionel," or modification of the old imperial constitution,<sup>1</sup> which retained in its main features the electoral system as established by *Senatus Consultus* of 16 Thermidor An X. Paris acquiesced with mixed emotions in this fresh turn of the wheel and the country—apart from some not very alarming royalist disturbances, of which that in Provence was the most serious—did the same. The *Acte Additionel* was at once submitted to a plebiscite and ratified; but only about two-thirds of the electors recorded their votes, which is evidence that large numbers were halting between two opinions. France in fact was in an equivocal position. She wanted Napoleon but she wanted peace as well, and the two things were incompatible. Not that Napoleon was unwilling to abandon his dreams of universal dominion, accept the situation, and rule in a France restricted to her ancient frontiers; at any rate he professed to have learnt his lesson and to be willing and anxious to do so: he had returned to oust the Bourbons not to restore the European Empire. But Europe would have none of this. Directly the news of the escape

<sup>1</sup> "Acte Additionel aux Constitutions de l'Empire" (22 April, 1815). In a preamble there is an apology for the Napoleonic Empire. Its aim had been a great European federal system; the attempt to establish this had forbidden liberal reform at home; as that aim was now abandoned, modifications of the Constitution were possible; hence the "*Acte Additionel*," which, while confirming the earlier imperial Constitutions, made the following modifications. Legislative power was to be in the hands of the Emperor and two chambers—peers and representatives; the former appointed by the Emperor and hereditary, the latter elected by the electoral colleges (the system of "*candidatures*" being abandoned, and the secondary electors choosing the 629 *représentants* with complete freedom). The Chamber of Representatives was quinquennial; the sittings of both chambers were public; legislation was to be initiated by the Government only. Industries were to have special representation. Taxes were to be voted annually, and no taxation or military levy could be imposed without a law. Responsibility of ministers was decreed, and ministers could be impeached by the representatives before the peers. Judges were to be nominated by the Emperor for life. The Constitution concluded with a summary of the rights of citizens, which included equality before the law, personal liberty, freedom of religion, inviolability of property (including State property), right of free speech (with modifications) and right of petition. Martial Law (state of siege) could not be decreed except in case of invasion. The restoration of the Bourbons could not be decreed.

from Elba reached Vienna the Congress declared "Bonaparte" an outlaw (13 March), and on 17 March a military convention was signed between Great Britain, Russia, Austria, and Prussia, by which each continental power bound itself to put 150,000 men into the field, while Britain agreed to pay a subsidy of £5,000,000. Clearly therefore all other matters were thrown into the shade by the European crisis. Napoleon's advances to Austria and Britain were brushed on one side. However much he might desire peace, war was inevitable. His first business therefore, however much he might regret it, was to take stock of the military situation. It was alarming but not so desperate as might have been expected.

The army left by Louis XVIII stood at 200,000 men and by the calling up of reserves (*décret d'appel*—9 April) it was raised by June to 284,000, of whom about 100,000 were required for garrison duty. The encouraging thing was that the country was full of the veterans of the earlier campaigns—including all the prisoners of war liberated at the peace. But they only came slowly to the colours, and it was difficult to secure the requisite numbers without recourse to the conscription, which was so detested that the Emperor was loath to revive it; he also hesitated to call out the 250,000 National Guards, for fear of their radical propensities. In the end he was obliged to call up the 1815 conscripts and to use the National Guard for garrison duty. By these means he managed to collect about 180,000 men for the front and about the same number for fortress work, but of the former some 10,000 had to be sent to la Vendée to deal with a royalist rising, while three corps were detached to protect the eastern frontier and another detachment was sent to the south in case of a Spanish invasion. This left rather less than 125,000 men for the main field army.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Infantry	.	.	.	.	89,415
Cavalry	.	.	.	.	22,303
Artillery	.	.	.	.	12,871

Total 124,588 and 344 cannon.

Navez, L., "Les Quatre-Bras, Ligny, Waterloo et Wavre" (1910). Grouard's estimate is 124,000 men with 370 guns (Grouard, "Critique de la campagne de 1815," pp. 245-8).

The morale and quality of the rank and file of this small army was on the whole admirable, and its devotion to its leader was only equalled by its hatred of the Bourbons. It was probably the best army that Napoleon had led since 1807. Its chief defect was that it was liable to attacks of nervousness. It saw traitors everywhere; and there were as a matter of fact plenty about. Many officers—and superior officers too—were suspected of Bourbonism, and at every important moment in the opening stages of the campaign, French officers kept going over to the enemy with valuable information. This had a most demoralizing effect and, as Houssaye puts it, made the army of 1815 the most fragile as well as the most formidable that Napoleon had commanded. But if the quality of the troops was excellent there were grave defects not only in equipment and commissariat but also in the staff arrangements and leadership. Very few of the old marshals were left; Davout it is true was there, but he was wanted at the War Office. Ney returned to the colours in time to take part in the campaign; Grouchy was a respectable leader of cavalry, but no one could replace Berthier as Chief-of-the-Staff and Soult, who took his place, was by no means an efficient substitute.<sup>1</sup> It is idle to speculate as to how many of the mistakes of the campaign of 1815 were due to the inefficiency of the staff rather than to the falling off of Napoleon's powers. Certain it is that there was a want of precision in orders<sup>2</sup> which showed the touch of an inexperienced hand, and we may well believe that the inexplicable delays that occurred at critical moments of the campaign may have been due to deficiencies in the machine as well as to the hitherto unnoticed weakness in the hand that controlled it.<sup>3</sup> Things that used to run automatically under Berthier now demanded

<sup>1</sup> See Gourgaud, "St. Hélène," II. 84, 85, where Napoleon deplures having taken Soult for chief-of-staff and says he would have been better with Andréossi. He adds that he should have taken Suchet with him and made Clausel Minister for War.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. in the orders to Ney on 16 June. *Infra*, p. 239, note.

<sup>3</sup> Napoleon himself grumbled at the dearth of generals. Ney in particular had no proper chief-of-staff—no brain to form a complement to his courage.

the personal attention of the Emperor, and this just at the moment when his sleepless energy and unrivalled capacity for detail was beginning to fail him.

The question whether Napoleon had greatly declined in vigour and was actually in ill-health is one over which opinion has been sharply divided. The balance of probability is that there had been some decline going on since 1812. The strain of his extraordinary career had told on him. He had grown corpulent and was subject to fits of drowsiness. He had had from time to time sharp attacks of illness. His mind indeed was as clear as ever and his conceptions as grand. The preliminary stages of 1815 were as fine a thing as he ever did. But he had lost the old *sentiment de succès*, he tired more easily, and he was not so quick at a crisis. He lost opportunities and misjudged events. The conclusion is that the Napoleon of 1815 was not the Napoleon of the great days, and what this meant in a desperate campaign with inadequate subordinates was something very serious indeed.

There were, broadly speaking, two courses open to Napoleon. He was to be confronted sooner or later with four or five armies which were slowly gathering along the French frontiers from Belgium to Basle and might be expected in June or July to amount to anything between 500,000 and 600,000 men. The northern extremity of this half-circle of enemies was Wellington's army; next to him came Blücher; then the armies of Russia and Bavaria and finally the Austrians. To meet this attack, Napoleon could either adopt the policy he had adopted in 1814, viz. retard the advance of the enemy by small forces on the frontiers while he completed the organization of his defence, and endeavour to repeat the successes of 1814, when they had reached the Châlons-Nancy-Reims region. Or he could attack or shatter one or other of the allies, before they entered France, ruin the morale of the coalition, and deal with the other allies in detail. This alternative was the easier in that he possessed, what he had not possessed in 1814, a powerful field army fairly well organized; it was also suited to his own genius and that of the French

soldier, who is better fitted for the offensive than the defensive. Moreover it would spare France the horrors of invasion, relieve the internal political situation, and avoid the danger which might come from the many disloyal elements which still existed. An offensive-defensive was therefore by far the best policy, and Napoleon had no hesitation in adopting it. And there was even less difficulty in the choice of an arena for the execution of this policy. The allied armies in Belgium were not only the most vigorous of his enemies and the earliest in the field, but they also formed the greatest menace to France. No offensive in fact was possible in any other arena so long as the allied armies in Belgium were within striking distance of Paris. Thus a blow in that direction was a necessary preliminary to any offensive against the other allies.<sup>1</sup>

Even in this preliminary task Napoleon was confronted with considerable numerical odds. Wellington with about 85,000<sup>2</sup> available for battle, a motley host of British, Hanoverians, Nassauers, Brunswickers and Dutch-Belgians, lay covering Brussels, while Blücher, at the head of 117,000, lay between Liège and Charleroi. Against these 200,000 Napoleon could only put into the field about 125,000 men. Thus, while numerically far superior to Wellington alone and appreciably superior to Blücher alone, Napoleon would be in a grave numerical inferiority to almost any combination of the two.<sup>3</sup> His strategy was therefore directed to the prevention of such a combination.

Napoleon's concentration of the French army behind the Belgian frontier was, in spite of faults in execution primarily due to the blunders of Soult, one of the most skilful of his

<sup>1</sup> Wellington alone of the allied commanders realized that Napoleon could not strike towards the Rhine so long as he and Blücher were on the Belgian frontier (see "Supplementary Despatches").

<sup>2</sup> The figures are Professor Oman's (Cambridge Modern History), 105,000 in all, of whom 20,000 occupied the fortresses = 85,000.

<sup>3</sup> 30,000 more than Wellington.

8,000 more than Blücher.

87,000 less than Wellington and Blücher.



opening operations.<sup>1</sup> By the evening of 14 June the French army was closed up and the heads of its columns within a short distance of the frontier. Napoleon's plan was based on the knowledge that the communications of the allied armies led in different directions—Wellington's to Antwerp and the sea, Blücher's to Liége and the Rhine. He intended, by striking at the point where their outposts overlapped, to defeat and separate them before they could join forces on the field, driving each towards his own base and away from his ally. He knew that the allies were in scattered cantonments<sup>2</sup> covering about thirty-five leagues of country, and he hoped, not without reason, that he would be able to bring the Prussians to action before Wellington had time to come up. Instructing his leftmost corps to observe with their cavalry the army of Wellington, he directed his main army in a dense mass upon the neighbourhood of Charleroi, where stood the Prussian outposts of Ziethen's corps. This closeness of concentration and dense massing of troops surpasses any of Napoleon's preliminary operations, and was evidently done with the intention of bringing on an immediate battle, and of driving the strategic wedge between the allies.

Meanwhile in the head-quarters of the allies there was a certain amount of misunderstanding and friction, due mainly to distrust of Wellington on the part of Blücher's staff, especially on that of Gneisenau. There is in fact good reason to suppose that the Prussians desired, for political reasons, to deal with the French single-handed; and were confident in their ability to do so. Wellington on his part did his best to overcome this distrust; and it was by his request that the outposts had been brought into touch in the neighbourhood of Charleroi. Neither Wellington nor Blücher, however, correctly read the daring and masterly plan of Napoleon. They had ample knowledge, from French War Office leakage,

<sup>1</sup> Grouard, *op. cit.* p. 10: "Il n'y a rien de plus parfait dans toutes ses campagnes".

<sup>2</sup> This was due to their desire to spare the country and to facilitate supply. Blücher met with great opposition from the Belgian authorities when he proposed further concentration (Clausewitz, "*Der Feldzug von 1815*," p. 38).

of the difficulties with which Napoleon was struggling, and did not believe that he would have the temerity to take the offensive against their superior numbers. Wellington, in particular, was convinced that the danger of a French offensive was past, and by clinging to this conviction and delaying his concentration he brought the allied cause within an ace of ruin; nor was Blücher quick to seize the facts of the situation. On 14 June neither commander had any suspicion of the truth, and both armies were spread over a wide front, requiring from a day and a half to two days to effect a concentration. They were in fact surprised, and that not for want of information, but because they failed to read Napoleon's mind.

It was fortunate for them that in its execution Napoleon's great design fell far short of the grandeur of its conception. Up till the night of 14 June the allied commanders remained without suspicion. Then about 10 p.m. a party of French officers who had deserted brought to Blücher's head-quarters the news of Napoleon's proximity. Gneisenau at once ordered a preliminary concentration towards Sombreffe; but he never passed on the information to Hardinge (Wellington's representative at the Prussian head-quarters); so that Wellington was not aware of Napoleon's advance until the evening of the 15th, with what disconcerting results will be seen. Although surprised, neither of the allied commanders thought of falling back; they believed that they could concentrate sufficient forces, Blücher at Ligny and Wellington at les Quatre Bras or Nivelles, to give battle on that line. Napoleon, who, to use Wellington's phrase, had up to this point "humbugged" the allies, now played into their hands. Ney, who had ridden into the French head-quarters on the 15th, was entrusted with the command of the left wing (about 45,000) and ordered to advance and hustle the enemy in the direction of Brussels; Grouchy was given the command of the right wing, while Napoleon retained personal control of the centre and reserves. Unfortunately neither wing acted with energy either on the afternoon of the 15th or on the morning of the 16th, and there is an ominous dilatoriness in the dispatch of the





Emperor's orders which indicate the presence of a new phenomenon; he is suffering from fatigue.<sup>1</sup> The result was that the Battles of Ligny and les Quatre Bras (16 June) began a good deal later than they need have begun,<sup>2</sup> and the allies were made a present of some hours to get over their surprise and hurry on their concentration.

Napoleon had certainly surprised the allies but he evidently believed the surprise to be more complete than it actually was; when he began the Battle of Ligny he had only 63,000 men against the Prussian 83,000. This battle—the last of Napoleon's victories—was in many respects creditable to his generalship and the fighting qualities of his troops. Blücher's hasty and ill-considered leadership lends colour to the idea that he was anxious at all costs to force the fighting and account for the French single-handed. On the other hand, with one fatal exception, the Emperor displayed all his old skill. That error was the failure to use Drouet d'Erlon's corps, which he had detached from Ney's command when he found himself engaged with the main body of the Prussians. Drouet d'Erlon appeared on the left flank at the critical moment of the battle.<sup>3</sup> Napoleon (who had himself summoned him) did not realize that it was he and tamely allowed him to be recalled by Ney, with the result that a whole army corps was kept marching about between the two battle-fields all afternoon and was never engaged on either field. This lapse is abundant proof of the decline in Napoleon's powers.<sup>4</sup> The general result of the battle, in spite of this, was favourable to the French. The Prussian centre was broken, and the army forced off the field in considerable disorder,<sup>5</sup> the beaten troops flying north-

<sup>1</sup> On the 15th the Emperor was eighteen hours in the saddle, and came in utterly exhausted at 9 p.m. ("Correspondance," op. cit. 22,055).

<sup>2</sup> Les Quatre Bras at 2.0 p.m., Ligny at 3.30.

<sup>3</sup> Not, it is true, in the exact quarter where Napoleon expected him (see Grouchy, "Mémoires," iv. 118).

<sup>4</sup> It was Moltke's opinion that if Drouet d'Erlon had been used at Ligny one-half of Blücher's army would have been destroyed ("wäre für Blücher vernichtend gewesen"); on the other hand if he had come in at les Quatre Bras Wellington must almost certainly have been defeated. See Letten Vorbeck, *Napoleons Untergang*, 1815," 1. 331.

<sup>5</sup> 8000 men left the colours.

wards throughout the night. The Prussians lost 12,000 to the French 8500. Blücher had been knocked senseless on the battle-field, and Gneisenau, who took over the command, was driven by circumstances to order points of assembly for the routed army to the north of the field. When Blücher came to, he took advantage of this fact to order a retreat to Wavre instead of to Namur.

Meanwhile Ney in the early afternoon had come into touch with Perponcher's Dutch-Belgian Brigade (8000 strong) at les Quatre Bras. Perponcher had taken up this position on his own initiative, for Wellington had named Nivelles (five miles to the west). Wellington, who was always uneasy about his right and had no reason to be sure that the main French attack would not be delivered in this quarter, on his arrival at the front confirmed Perponcher's dispositions, and all morning the various allied troops were hurrying in a wild helter-skelter to their allotted positions. Wellington then rode over to Blücher's head-quarters and gave the much-disputed conditional promise "to come" (to Blücher's assistance) "if he was not attacked himself". He was attacked, and attacked by forces at first far superior to anything he could put into line at les Quatre Bras, and being attacked he did what was quite equivalent in value to the suggested co-operation at Ligny; he held 45,000 to 50,000 French all day (for we must count d'Erlon's corps) and put Blücher in a numerical superiority at Ligny. That Ligny was not a rout was due to the stoutness of Wellington's defence at les Quatre Bras. That it was a defeat was not Wellington's fault but Blücher's.

Ney failed to rush the weakly held position of les Quatre Bras at the first attempt (2 p.m.). Bad troops as they were supposed to be, the Dutch-Belgians held out for an hour, and by that time the arrival of Picton's Division and of some Dutch-Belgian cavalry relieved the situation. After this reinforcements kept arriving at intervals until, at 5 p.m., Ney's numerical superiority had been converted into an inferiority. The French artillery was very deadly and their cavalry, mixed with infantry, charged repeatedly, the most notable charge being that of Kellermann. His failure to break

the British line half-maddened Ney, and just at the moment when he most urgently needed infantry reinforcements he learnt that Drouet d'Erlon, by Napoleon's orders, had directed his corps towards Ligny. Wild with rage and apprehension Ney sent to recall him.<sup>1</sup> This message reached Drouet d'Erlon just as he got within striking distance of the Prussian right at Ligny; the General's nerve failed, and, lacking fresh instructions from Napoleon, he returned to the Brussels road just in time to be too late. Ney had ruined his master's battle and had lost his own. For at about 7 p.m. Wellington took the offensive all along the line and pushed Reille back. Ney had failed tactically and strategically. He had failed in particular to grasp the change in his errand consequent on the Prussian stand at Ligny. His ought to have become a containing movement and his master's dispatches should have made that plain.<sup>2</sup> The recall of Drouet was a terrible blunder.

After the Battle of Ligny, Napoleon, who believed the victory to be decisive and the Prussians to be in full retreat towards their base via Namur and Liège, failed once more in activity.<sup>3</sup> He wasted many hours of the 17th and then told off Grouchy with 33,000 men to follow the Prussians in the direction of Namur. Then, with a sense of complete security, he turned to deal with Wellington. Napoleon had in fact misjudged both the extent of his victory and the recuperative power of the Prussians. As we know, the Prussian army, abandoning its original line of communications, had rallied on the Wavre road after Ligny. Blücher now received a message from Wellington asking for the support of one Prussian corps at Mont Saint Jean. In spite of Gneisenau's objections, Blücher,

<sup>1</sup> See de Baudus, "*Études sur Napoléon*," I. 112.

<sup>2</sup> As to Ney's instructions, two dispatches were sent to him by Soult in quick succession (2 p.m. and 3.15 p.m.). The first said: "Deal with those in front of you and then fall back and envelop the Prussians". The second: "Manœuvre to envelop the enemy's right and fall on his rear. This army (Blücher's) is lost if you act vigorously. The fate of France is in your hands" (Wellesley, "*Supplementary Despatches*," x. 494-5).

<sup>3</sup> Grouchy ("*Mémoires*," op. cit. iv. 22) says that he was ill and hurried back to Fleurus to rest.

with true gallantry, loyalty, and strategic insight, decided at once to march to Mont Saint Jean with his entire army and sent Wellington word that he would do so. That he was able to come to such a decision and to carry it out after the severe ordeal of Ligny is testimony not only to the Marshal's own determination but to the quality of his troops. Early on the morning of the 18th Thielmann was left to await any French pursuit, while the remainder of the army marched off in the direction of Mont Saint Jean. But if Blücher's decision was praiseworthy the way in which it was carried out by his subordinates was so faulty as to lend colour to the idea that they wished to thwart his plans, and thus in spite of Blücher's resolution the Battle of Waterloo was all but lost. The first of the Prussians might reasonably have been expected about midday, they were not actually in action till the middle of the afternoon. The one corps which had been asked for, had it come in time, might have been more valuable than the whole army which arrived so tardily.

Wellington received news of Blücher's defeat at Ligny and his retreat to Wavre at 9 a.m. on the 17th. He clung to his position at les Quatre Bras, however, with the greatest daring to the very last moment, presumably in order to take pressure off the Prussians, at the risk of being caught in flank when he did retreat. Later in the day he managed to effect his withdrawal to Mont Saint Jean. There, in a position of his own choosing, he decided to await Napoleon's attack, in spite of the latter's superiority in numbers<sup>1</sup> and quality of troops and his decided superiority in artillery. It was a bold decision, but Wellington knew as well as Napoleon did that the state of the ground would hamper the artillery and he knew—which Napoleon did not—that he could count on the support of the Prussians.

Napoleon was now in a complete fool's paradise. He

<sup>1</sup> The numbers at Waterloo were, allies 69,000 (less than half of whom were English), Napoleon 71,000. But the French had a great advantage in artillery (244 to 193 guns). Wellington had left 14,000 men on his right at Hal—a grave blunder, and one which shows that he never really understood Napoleon's plan.



believed that the Prussians were in full retreat on Namur with Grouchy hot on their tracks. As a matter of fact that general spent most of the 18th in correcting his original error of direction, while the Prussians were marching to join Wellington at Mont Saint Jean; Napoleon, however, was quite convinced that he had to deal with Wellington alone. He went about his business with leisurely security, and spent the morning of the 18th in reviewing his troops, and waiting for the ground to dry so that he might make full use of his artillery, the arm in which his superiority was most pronounced.<sup>1</sup> The battle began about noon with an attack on Hougomont (a farm-house which formed an out-work on the right front of the allied position) by first one, then two, of Reille's divisions. It was successfully resisted by the British guards and proved very costly to the French. Then at about 1 p.m. Drouet d'Erlon attacked Picton on the British left. This attack was preceded by a devastating cannonade but was severely repulsed. The four French divisions attacked in cumbersome columnar formation, and were half-destroyed, mainly by Picton's infantry and the charge of the Union Cavalry Brigade. But the British cavalry in following up this success suffered greatly at the hands of the French lancers. The failure of this attack, and the demoralization of the troops, left Napoleon with practically no intact infantry except Bachelu's division, which later in the day attacked the British

<sup>1</sup> This question of the state of the ground is a vexed one. No doubt the ground was very bad and hampered the action of the guns. But Mercer was able to move guns at a trot during the morning of Waterloo. Jomini maintains that four hours would have made little difference in the state of the ground, for though the wind got up at 9 a.m. rain fell during the day. Drouet, who commanded the artillery, reported unfavourably in the morning and Napoleon, seeing no cause for haste, no doubt thought it best to wait. But he was also waiting to get up his troops which took a long time to reach the field. Had he known that the Prussians were coming, there can be no question that he would have attacked at once whatever the state of the ground. The fact that the artillery fire of the French was most deadly goes far to prove that the state of the ground was no serious obstacle. Refer to Jomini, "*Précis politique et militaire de la campagne de 1815*" (1839), p. 199, and to Mercer, "*Journal of the Waterloo Campaign*" (1870), I. 310.

right-centre without much result, and the Guard. For Lobau's corps was soon to be engaged in warding off the attack of Bülow's Prussian corps on the right rear of the French position at Planchenoit.

Napoleon had become aware of the approach of the Prussians about the time of Drouet d'Erlon's attack. But it was only by degrees that he realized that he would have to deal with the whole Prussian army. From the moment of the Prussian intervention, however, the whole character of the struggle changed. From his previous security the Emperor was suddenly plunged into a position that was well-nigh desperate. But political exigencies forbade any attempt to break off the battle, even if he could have done so. The period from 4 p.m. to 6.30 was signalized by the great cavalry attacks. These were directed in rapid succession mainly against the hitherto unattacked allied right-centre, and were repulsed by the infantry squares supported by allied cavalry. These premature cavalry attacks were directed by Ney, and Napoleon afterwards blamed the Marshal for "massacring the cavalry". But after all Ney was or should have been under Napoleon's control. The result of these wild and fruitless charges was that at 6 p.m. Napoleon had no intact troops save the infantry of the Guard; and by that time Lobau's corps and the young Guard (i.e. one-third of the entire Guard) were deeply engaged at Planchenoit with Bülow's corps, the bulk of which was at last on the field.

About 6.30 Ney carried la Haye Sainte and opened a gap in Wellington's line; but this success came too late. There were no troops to take advantage of it, and Wellington by a great effort was able to re-form his line. From 7 p.m. onward the arrival of Prussian cavalry reinforced the extreme left of the terribly weakened allied line. This enabled Wellington to draw troops from that part of the line to reinforce his threatened centre. Napoleon's position was now desperate. He made one last effort to crush Wellington before the Prussian flank attack overwhelmed him and sent some 5000 to 6000 of the Guard against the allied right-centre. This last attack was defeated by Adam's Brigade and the

British Guards. At that moment Napoleon's star set for ever below the horizon. The pursuit was taken up by the Prussians who chased the fugitives relentlessly all through the night. The French lost about 30,000 killed and wounded, and all their guns; were, in fact, annihilated. The allied army lost 13,000, the Prussians more than 6000.

Of the campaign of 1815 it may be said that from the first it was a brilliantly conceived forlorn hope which failed in execution. At the head of a small but splendid army, Napoleon had hoped to inflict a staggering blow on the allies in Belgium before the more distant members of the coalition could make themselves felt. He was grievously hampered by the gaps in his staff and the inefficiency of his subordinates. Soult was a poor substitute for Berthier, and to his want of knowledge of staff-management may be traced many of the mistakes which wrecked a well-conceived campaign. Ney, for all his dazzling bravery, was ill-qualified for the responsible tasks with which, in the absence of others, he had to be entrusted. It was a pity that Davout could not have been employed on active service rather than at the War Office. Grouchy, though he must be exonerated from the often-repeated charge of having ruined the campaign, was sadly lacking in initiative.<sup>1</sup>

But over and above this failure of his subordinates there was a far more fatal failure in Napoleon's own leadership. No amount of special pleading will alter the facts that Napoleon exaggerated the extent of his success at Ligny, that he assumed on insufficient grounds that the Prussians, after

<sup>1</sup> Grouchy attacked Thielmann's corps at Wavre on the afternoon of the 18th; Thielmann held the line of the Dyle until evening ended the fight, and so ensured the decisive participation of the Prussian main army in the Battle of Waterloo. Grouchy could never make good the loss of time involved in the original blunder of direction, for which Napoleon was responsible. He might, perhaps, have done more to hinder the Prussian march, but it is very questionable whether, after he heard the Waterloo cannonade and realized the situation, he could have done anything to influence the result. Nevertheless, he became Napoleon's scapegoat. In justice to the unfortunate marshal it should be remembered that he implored the Emperor not to entrust him with a task for which he knew himself to be unfitted.

that battle, were retiring on Namur and had ceased to be a factor in the campaign; that he neglected to take the obvious steps to locate them; that he gave Grouchy the wrong direction on the 17th; that his tardy attack on the 18th greatly facilitated Wellington's task. Finally that his management of the Battle of Waterloo was unworthy of his reputation; for he allowed Reille to waste himself in the attack at Hougomont; he wasted his cavalry on an intact part of the allied line; and he staked his last card on an attack on fresh troops. To say that Ney not Napoleon was responsible for these blunders, that the Emperor was engaged in repulsing the Prussian attack at Planchenoit, is to argue that the man who controlled vast fields like Austerlitz, Wagram, Dresden, and Leipzig allowed himself at Waterloo to be fettered by a village. Waterloo is a conclusive proof of the deterioration of the Emperor's powers. No man, so he himself had said, can make war for more than six years. He had proved the truth of his own aphorism.

Napoleon reached Paris on 21 June. In spite of the terrible ordeal through which he had passed he did not despair of retrieving the situation. He pleaded for a dictatorship. But the Senate took matters into its own hands. Europe was at war with Napoleon not with France. Europe was advancing on Paris. Only Napoleon's abdication would satisfy the allies and that abdication, therefore, the Senate demanded. And so on the 22nd he laid down the sceptre for the second time. On the 25th he withdrew to Malmaison; on the 29th he fled from this refuge only a few hours before the arrival of Blücher's cavalry, and proceeded to Rochefort (3 July) with the idea of taking ship for America. Thwarted in this by the presence of English ships he took refuge on 15 July on the English warship "Bellerophon" which conveyed him to England.

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## CHAPTER XXXV

### THE SECOND RESTORATION

(1815-1830)

THE Hundred Days had been no more than an epilogue to the amazing career of Napoleon. Europe had not been justified in assuming that he could be made to disappear without some such final thunder-clap. The Emperor had surrendered to the English, hoping that, like his Bourbon rival, he might be allowed to lead the life of an English country gentleman. But Napoleon I was a very different thing from Louis XVIII.<sup>1</sup> The one had been the protégé of Europe, and was the very emblem of legitimacy, the other was an upstart who had kept Europe in turmoil for fourteen years, subjected the most venerable monarchies to unprecedented indignities, and caused every throne to rock upon its foundations. Nor was he exactly suited for the part of an English country gentleman. The problem of what to do with him was in fact one of considerable difficulty. For a moment Lord Liverpool actually seems to have contemplated handing him over to Louis XVIII as a rebel subject. Eventually it was decided to confine him in the remote island of St. Helena. This decision sealed the Emperor's personal fate. A second escape became impossible.

Sympathy for one who had soared so high and was brought so low is natural, and yet it is possible to question whether retirement was not the only thing for Napoleon, since death

<sup>1</sup> Sieyès had urged Lanjuinais after Waterloo to rally to Napoleon. He argued that he was *l'homme de la nation* and that if, after the "barbarians" were driven out, he became a menace to liberty they could unite to hang him. (Ollivier, "l'Empire libéral," I. 77.)

had not come to his rescue. In recent years there had been many signs that, young as he was, the great man had outlived his greatness. "Let the Clerk date death," says Michelet, "from the day when the *pompes funèbres* follow the body to the grave; the historian dates it from the day when the old man loses productive activity." Napoleon was not an old man as years go, but had he not to some extent lost "productive activity"? His work was done. He had recreated France, "co-opted" the Revolution, founded upon it a civil order which by itself it could never have erected, and laid firm and strong the bases of that social and political structure which is still—in all essentials—the France we know. But all this he had done before 1808. From that time his genius had become distorted. He had given free rein to his passion for glory and his lust of conquest.<sup>1</sup> More than this, his judgment had become distorted, even his military touch fitful and spasmodic. It would have been better for him and better for France if he had perished on the field of Wagram.<sup>2</sup> By 1815 it had become imperative that he should leave the stage. The last act is too often the weak spot in the play; it was so in the Napoleonic drama, and it was time to ring down the curtain.

The strange thing is—and yet it was no more than natural—that, no sooner had Napoleon disappeared from the political arena, than the "Napoleonic Legend" began to grow; and from the remote island of his exile the Emperor began to exercise an influence upon Europe far greater than he could have hoped to do from any other vantage ground. Veiled in a mystery which he had not sought, he continued to exercise in an always increasing degree that strange fascination which was perhaps his most remarkable attribute; and it was this, more even than the solid constructive work which he had accomplished, that established the Napoleonic legend. That

<sup>1</sup> As he himself put it, *J'ai trop embrassé de choses* (Gourgaud, op. cit. II. 302).

<sup>2</sup> Napoleon himself wavered between Moscow, Dresden, and Waterloo as the moment when he should have perished, and on the whole, and naturally enough, he favoured Waterloo (Rosebery, "Napoleon, The Last Phase," p. 197).

legend completely overshadows the period of the Second Restoration ; it was destined in an even greater degree to stultify the Orleans monarchy, and by 1848 had attained such a hold over the minds of Frenchmen that it was possible for the Emperor's nephew to revive the Napoleonic dynasty. But the most conspicuous immediate outcome of the growth of the Napoleonic legend was the effect it had on the French mind with regard to constitutional monarchy. France had tasted the sweets of personal government by a ruler of transcendent genius, and to that ideal she has constantly reverted, until, embittered by repeated disappointments, she at last abandoned the search for genius and gave herself over to government by politicians. There are many, however, who believe that she only awaits the advent of genius to revert once more to personal government.

To return to the period of the Second Restoration ; the Bourbons misjudged the Napoleonic legend and misread the spirit of the people of France. Louis XVIII, who had learnt his lesson in the Hundred Days, now it is true abandoned, or tried to abandon, the idea of wiping out all trace of the Revolution, of restoring the privileges of the *ancien régime*, and making restitution of the *biens nationaux* ; he bowed to the Revolution, and determined to submit to the position of constitutional monarch. He accepted this distasteful rôle with absolute honesty and set himself to play it with unswerving sincerity. He made a *mariage de convenance* with the representative system and proved himself a paragon of conjugal fidelity. "J'avais la jambe belle," said Louis, "elle a été cassée, on me l'a remis tellement quellement. Mais enfin je marche, et j'aime mieux boiter que subir une amputation dont le résultat le plus probable serait de me rendre cul-de-jatte." "But," he adds, "it is a trifle absurd to say that it is an advantage to me to have a broken leg."<sup>1</sup> The misfortune was that the sacrifice that Louis felt himself impelled to make was unnecessary, and that in making it he was actually running counter to the subconscious spirit of France. Before 1815 he had ignored both the Revolution and the Napoleonic

<sup>1</sup> Daudet, "Louis XVIII et Decazes" (ed. 1899), p. 127.



Empire. Now, while he accepted the Revolution, he continued to forget the Empire. So he did not cease at the Second Restoration to spurn historical continuity.

It is time to take stock of the new Louis XVIII, weaned as he was from the errors of the First Restoration. The King is by no means an unattractive, still less an uninteresting, figure. Advancing age, corpulence, and the ravages of gout were by this time rapidly depriving him of bodily activity.<sup>1</sup> In character he was generous, kindly, and affectionate, even sentimental. His relations for instance with his minister the young Comte Decazes were paternal in their affection; and the letters he addressed to him are pathetically endearing. This affability unfortunately tended to degenerate into weakness, especially in his relations with the royal family. "It is not easy," he used to say, "to play the King with one's brother, when as a child one has shared a bed with him"; but it should not have been impossible. Mentally Louis was extremely shrewd and endowed with a keen political judgment; and, although pedantic and a prey to literary foibles, he had a ready tongue and the faculty of expressing a situation in a pithy and often epigrammatic sentence. "*Je n'ai pas le malheur de craindre mon peuple*" was worthy of the descendant of Henry IV; and the letter in which he declared that if the allies blew up (as they proposed to do) the bridge of Jena in Paris he was ready to be blown up with it, was a popular bit of bombast, and showed that even he was alive in some degree to the glories of the Empire.<sup>2</sup> Louis then was not without royal qualities. Posterity has acknowledged the extraordinary difficulty of the situation in which he was placed. A man of supreme genius might have laid the foundations of a lasting dynasty, it required a man of some real

<sup>1</sup> The loss of the use of his limbs, however, perhaps added to rather than detracted from his dignity by concealing the "Bourbon waddle".

<sup>2</sup> Doubt has been cast on the truth of this anecdote. Talleyrand, it is suggested, gave instructions for a strong protest to Blücher ("*quelque chose de fort*") and afterwards put words into Louis XVIII's mouth which he never uttered. Blücher's attempt to blow up the bridge was not very successful (Duvergier de Hauranne, "*Histoire du gouvernement parlementaire*," III. 189, and note).

ability merely to maintain himself upon the throne as Louis XVIII did.

Napoleon had left Malmaison on 29 June, and had embarked on the "Bellerophon" on 15 July. On 6 and 7 July the allies occupied Paris, and on the following day Louis XVIII re-entered his capital. In doing so he made his first mistake. By returning "in the baggage train of the allies" he put himself in a false position with his people and with Europe. He would have been wiser to proceed to Lyons as Talleyrand had advised him to do,<sup>1</sup> and thence promulgate a constitution and negotiate with the European Powers. Dependence on invaders was the fatal infatuation of the later Bourbons; it dogged them with curious persistency; and its result on this occasion was to place the settlement of France in the hands of the European Powers. The settlement of 1815 is thus a matter of European rather than French history; the internal affairs of France had become a matter of concern to Europe, and Louis played into the hands of the allies by returning to Paris in the wake of the army. Talleyrand was appointed Chief Minister and now, on the instance of the Duke of Wellington, Fouché was made Minister of Police. The appointment of this regicide was humiliating to the King and offensive to all Royalists; it was however necessary, in Wellington's opinion, in order to conciliate Jacobin feeling in Paris and to facilitate the immediate entry of the King into the capital.<sup>2</sup> The ministry was completed by Gouvion-Saint Cyr, Jaucourt, Pasquier, and Baron Louis (9 July).

Already, at the instigation of Talleyrand, the King had published at Cambrai a declaration, in which he acknowledged the mistakes of the First Restoration and disavowed all intention of reviving tithes and feudal dues or laying hands on the *domaines nationaux*: in other words he accepted the social and economic results of the Revolution. His first action after his restoration was to dissolve the Chamber of Deputies and order the electoral colleges to assemble. The age-limit for both electors and deputies was fixed at twenty-

<sup>1</sup> Talleyrand, "Mémoires" (ed. Broglie, 1891), III. 194.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, op. cit. 237-8.

five. Thus the new Government "appealed to the country," with what startling results will subsequently be seen. The ministry now forced on the King measures which ensured liberty to the Press. They then concerned themselves with the proscription of the participators in the Hundred Days, and over this they split, Talleyrand urging that the peers who had gone over to Bonaparte should be simply dismissed, while Fouché, who like all habitual traitors was subject to much pressure from parties with whom he had intrigued, was instigated by the ultra-royalists and foreign governments to demand the proscription of more than 100 persons. This list was in the end reduced to fifty-seven, nineteen of whom, including Ney, were handed over to the councils of war. Ney was eventually found guilty and shot (7 December). He had been guilty of aggravated treachery and richly deserved his fate.<sup>1</sup> Grouchy, Cambronne, Drouot and Lavalette were also handed over to military tribunals; Soult, Boulay de la Meurthe, Vandamme Thibaudeau and Carnot were proscribed. "Où veux-tu que j'aille, traître?" said Carnot; "où tu veux, imbécile," replied Fouché.

These acts of severity were the signal for an outbreak of royalist violence in the south, which the Government, having no military force at its disposal, was powerless to check. The "White Terror" was directed against both Revolutionists and Bonapartists. Many hundreds were killed in spite of the protests of the Government.<sup>2</sup> Talleyrand now insisted on Fouché's removal from the ministry (19 September); but he himself was not able long to survive his colleague. The elections were completed during September and it became clear that the electors had pronounced against the "liberal" ministry. Louis XVIII had not attempted to influence the elections except in the direction of moderation, and cannot be held responsible for the results. The truth was that,

<sup>1</sup> This is not to say that the execution was a politic act. It was not. Ney appealed from the Council of War to the Peers. His actual execution took place after the fall of Talleyrand's government.

<sup>2</sup> See Talleyrand, "Mémoires," op. cit. III. 204, for the Government's denunciation of the "White Terror".

just as the Legislative Assembly—elected under the influence of the September massacres—had represented only the opinion of an incendiary minority, so now the *chambre introuvable*,<sup>1</sup> elected (on a very restricted franchise) under the influence of the “White Terror,” represented only the opinions of a reactionary minority. An extraordinary situation was thus created and we have the curious spectacle of a King, honestly inclined to moderation, repeatedly forced by an elected body into reactionary courses which were contrary to his better judgment. Thus we enter a kind of political wonderland where topsy-turveydom prevails; the Chamber not the Crown is the menace to liberty; the ultra-reactionaries cry out for extensions of the franchise to promote their ends; and the moderates insist on its limitation in order to thwart them.

The advent of the *chambre introuvable* was the end of Talleyrand, whose ministry resigned on 20 September. His fall was the signal for a sad collapse in the conduct of foreign affairs. It was also a personal triumph for the Czar, who had a special dislike for the acute Prince, due to the latter's success at Russia's expense in the Congress of Vienna and to the treacherous way in which he had negotiated with Austria behind Russia's back. Alexander scored a further success in the appointment of Talleyrand's successor. The Duc de Richelieu, who now reluctantly took office, had actually been in the service of Russia during the many years which, as an *émigré*, he had spent outside his native country. “Persuadé qu'entre les images de la Divinité sur la terre il n'y en avait de plus belle et de plus digne que l'Empéreur Alexandre, il n'imagina rien de mieux, en se chargeant des affaires de la France, que d'aller implorer les lumières et l'appui de ce Prince.” Talleyrand's caustic verdict on his successor is far from just, but it contains this grain of truth, that it was impossible for Richelieu not to favour in some degree the country of his adoption. Nevertheless he was an upright, honourable, and patriotic man who cherished no feelings of revenge. His

<sup>1</sup> So it was called. The phrase is untranslatable; the nearest English equivalent is perhaps “too good to be true”.

career indeed is a splendid refutation of the charge so often made that to be an *émigré* was necessarily to be an enemy of France ; under the circumstances, with reactionary ideas in the ascendant, the appointment was probably the best that could have been made ; if the chief minister had to have a royalist past there was no one who combined that past with a less recriminatory ideal, or with a greater desire for internal peace than the Duc de Richelieu. In the words of his colleague Decazes : " there was no one better situated than he to serve as a bond between the ' men of the past ' (i.e. of the *ancien régime*), and the honourable men of the regime created by the Revolution ".<sup>1</sup> With Richelieu there took office Decazes as Minister of Police, the Duc de Feltre (better known as Clarke, one of the traitors of 1814 and 1815),<sup>2</sup> as Minister of War, Dubouchage as Minister of Marine, Vaublanc (another of Napoleon's creations) as Minister of Interior, Corvetto as Minister of Finance, and Barbé-Marbois as Minister of Justice (24 September, 1815). This ministry held office from September, 1815, to December, 1818. Seldom have ministers been confronted with circumstances so grave. On the one hand they found the country occupied by foreign troops and regarded with suspicion by all Europe ; the majority in the Chamber crying out for reaction, restitution, and recriminations, for a policy, that is, which they regarded as fatal to their country ; an heir-presumptive, intriguing and encouraging the violence of the *ultras*, or extreme reactionaries : whereas if they looked in the other direction for support, leant that is towards the Liberals and the left in the Chamber, they at once provoked Europe, laid themselves open to accusations of Jacobinism, and perhaps endangered the throne which it was their first object to serve.

The only way in which a ministry so situated could hope to govern was by a policy of give and take, by balancing, that is, between the various parties ; thus with the ministry of Richelieu begins that form of parliamentary government which is peculiar to modern France (and which is so hope-

<sup>1</sup> Daudet, *op. cit.* p. 91.

<sup>2</sup> He it was that betrayed Napoleon's military situation to Wellington.

lessly confusing to the English mind, accustomed to the simple party system), where regard has to be had not only to the ministry and the opposition, but to such shades of opinion as the right-centre and the left-centre. Safety in 1815 could clearly not be found on the extreme right with the *ultras* nor on the extreme left with the liberals. The ministry had to look to the two groups of the centre, and wavered according to circumstances between the two. In the end Richelieu came to identify himself with the right, Decazes with the left, centre, and the latter prevailed.

The first duty of the ministry was obviously to make the best settlement possible with the allied Powers, whose armies still occupied the country; and in pursuance of this policy on 20 November, 1815, was signed the Second Peace of Paris. It comprised two treaties. By the first France was to hand over to Sardinia the territory she still retained in Savoy, to abandon the districts in Belgium and Germany that she had received at the Treaty of Paris; to make restitution of all the works of art which had been carried to Paris during the Napoleonic campaigns, to pay an indemnity of 700 million francs, to submit to the indignity of a Committee of the Allies sitting at Paris to watch over her internal affairs, and for five years to support an army of occupation of 150,000 men. This treaty made it clear that the powers still regarded France as infected with the revolutionary bacillus and that they did not feel inclined to let her out of quarantine. Talleyrand would not have signed it; he had in September rejected an ultimatum which had embodied terms somewhat similar. But Talleyrand had never held office with a *chambre introuvable* and indeed could not have done so. Humiliating as the terms were, Richelieu could hardly have avoided accepting them.<sup>1</sup> The second treaty comprised in the Peace of Paris was equally humiliating, embodying as it did the very idea against which Talleyrand had so vehemently protested at the Conference of Vienna, to wit, an alliance of the powers from which France was excluded. This "Concert of Europe"

<sup>1</sup> Richelieu was overwhelmed with shame after signing the treaty. Duvergier de Hauranne, *op. cit.* III. 252.

to watch over France was the most cherished principle of the Emperor Alexander. Luckily for France it was distasteful to England and was accepted with a very bad grace by Castlereagh; and the gradual withdrawal of England from the Concert, helped to release France from the intolerable position of tutelage to which in 1815 she was forced to submit.

The question of external relations thus temporarily adjusted, the ministry concerned itself with the even more difficult business of internal affairs. On 18 December Vaublanc introduced a measure for readjusting the franchise in a reactionary fashion which the ministry considered would be favourable to itself. Villèle, a member of the extreme right, put forward counter proposals which are an illustration of the curious topsy-turveydom of public affairs. For while the liberal ministry proposed restrictions of the franchise, the spokesman of the reactionary party propounded a scheme for its extension. This remarkable contradiction sheds an interesting light on the condition of popular feeling in France in 1815.<sup>1</sup> Both these franchise proposals were rejected by the peers.

Corvetto, the Minister of Finance, next introduced the budget, in which the sale of the State forests was suggested. The *Ultras* of the right refused to sanction the proposals, and put forward extravagant demands on behalf of the Church. The European Powers, as represented by their delegates at Paris, at once took alarm. They believed that the conduct of the *Ultras* heralded a repudiation of the liabilities of France.<sup>2</sup> Wellington intervened and brought personal pressure upon the King to support his ministry against the intrigues of Artois and his friends on the right. He also had an interview with Artois, and indicated with characteristic bluntness that the policy he was pursuing and the triumph of the *Ultras* would

<sup>1</sup> Villèle's scheme was for a reduction of the franchise qualification from 300 to 50 francs (of direct taxation), which would have given an electorate of 2,000,000 instead of 100,000; indirect election and a qualification of 1000 francs for deputies; quinquennial elections and an age-limit of forty years.

<sup>2</sup> See Daudet, *op. cit.* p. 117, for the Duke of Wellington's suspicions.

lead to a European crisis. The united pressure of the representatives of the Powers was brought to bear on the King and the ministry to dissolve the Chamber. The King, however, was unwilling to dismiss a body whose chief fault was after all an inconvenient excess of royalism, while the ministry were not inclined to accept the dictation of the Powers. Nevertheless, so intolerable and so dangerous to the peace of Europe was the attitude of the majority in the Chamber, that on 29 April, after a much mangled budget had been carried, the King closed the session. The ministry was now divided as to what course to pursue. Could they go on with the Chamber as it was? could they reduce it numerically and make it more manageable, or must they dissolve? Decazes, the strong man of the ministry, pronounced in favour of the latter course, and finally persuaded the King to go with him.<sup>1</sup> Richelieu and Lainé (who had succeeded Vaublanc) were reluctant to take the great step; they preferred even an intriguing and obstructive right to any strengthening of the left. Nevertheless the counsels of Decazes prevailed, and on 5 September the *chambre introuvable* was dissolved. Born at a moment when political passions ran almost as high as they had run at the moment of the birth of the Convention, the *chambre introuvable* has been aptly compared (by M. Duvergier de Hauranne)<sup>2</sup> to that assembly. Duvergier points out that if its acts were not as bloody as those of the earlier assembly, its sentiments were, and he declares that it was only prevented from translating its sentiments into actions by the good sense of the King, the firmness of two ministers, and the moderation of a notable portion of the assembly. He goes on to ask, very pertinently, what would have happened in 1815 had the King been Charles X instead of Louis XVIII, the Chief Minister one of Charles' entourage instead of Richelieu. In the elections which ensued the ministry secured a majority, while the left of the Chamber was slightly strengthened; Decazes' policy was thus justified. A new electoral law sup-

<sup>1</sup> But only after infinite difficulty. Louis, as Richelieu said, behaved as if he were a besieged city.

<sup>2</sup> Op. cit. III. 418, 419.



plementary to the Charter of 1814 was now introduced, of which Royer-Collard, the most typical example of a liberal-royalist, was the real author. It confirmed and amplified the provisions of the Charter, and placed the government of France firmly in the hands of an electorate of barely 100,000 persons. This measure was passed on 5 February, 1817, and remained law for thirty years.

It was about this time that the policy identified with the name of Decazes, that, to wit, of "nationalizing the monarchy and royalizing France," of confirming the restoration while resisting reaction, began to receive support from a small but influential group of constitutional Royalists to whom the name *Doctrinaires* was applied. This group comprised Royer-Collard, de Serre, Barante, Camille Jordan, and Guizot, while Beugnot, Mounier, de Rémusat, and later de Broglie usually acted with it. The electoral law of 5 September, 1817, was to a large extent the work of the *Doctrinaires*.

The ministry was now well set on the course of liberal administration which Decazes had mapped out for it. Richelieu, it is true, and Lainé adopted it with reluctance; but the ministry had been strengthened, in the liberal-royalist sense, by the introduction of Molé, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr and Pasquier, and received steady support from the majority (i.e. from the right-centre and left-centre) in the Chamber. Against this composite ministerialist majority the *Ultras* and the left combined in an unholy alliance, supported on occasion by the *Doctrinaires* who adhered to no party. In December, 1817, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr introduced a very necessary scheme for reorganizing the army. Conscription had been abolished; and the ballot for seven years' service was now imposed in order to secure the 240,000 men aimed at. Promotion from the ranks was sanctioned, and promotion of officers by seniority. This was a thoroughly liberal measure and roused the heated opposition of the *Ultras*; the Government was obliged to lean more than ever on the left.

The work of the year 1818, the last of Richelieu's ministry, redounds to that minister's credit. Though he was more and more out of sympathy with the drift of his party, he was able

to remove from France the incubus of the army of occupation. In October the representatives of the Powers assembled at Aix-la-Chapelle to discuss the question of the outstanding portion of the indemnity and that of the evacuation of France. It was decided to fix the former at 265,000,000 francs, and the latter for 30 November. At the same time France was relieved from the surveillance of the Committee of the Powers. She remained suspect it is true, and another treaty was signed, making provision for concerted action in the event of a fresh revolution; on the other hand she was re-admitted to the comity of Europe, and invited to adhere to Alexander's great scheme for a union of the Powers for the preservation of peace. Thus she recovered self-respect and political liberty (9 October, 1818).

The Conference of Aix-la-Chapelle was an undoubted triumph for Richelieu; it may be doubted whether any other living Frenchman could have secured terms so favourable. During his absence on this mission the annual renewal of the Chamber had brought a great access of strength to the left: such out-and-out Liberals as Lafayette, Benjamin Constant, and Manuel secured seats. The effect at Aix-la-Chapelle was *affreux*, Richelieu wrote: and the effect on his own constitutional timidity was even greater. All his antecedents made traffic with revolutionaries revolting to him. The situation indeed was almost impossible. In the battle with the *Ultras* of the right, the moderate majority of the centre had played into the hands of the *Ultras* of the left. To Richelieu's ever despondent eye this heralded an eventual ultra-liberal majority, when government would be possible only by repeated *coups d'état*. Well might the unfortunate King despair; on each side, he said, he saw an abyss, and his only uncertainty was which of the two would swallow him up. For the moment the chances seemed in favour of the ultra-royalist abyss. The ministry split into pieces and Decazes, who steadily advocated the other abyss, to wit a moderate liberal policy, as the less dangerous, was actually ordered to leave France. "Je voudrais être mort, ô mon fils," wrote Louis to his favourite when he communicated to him the

news of his disgrace. But the formation of a majority from the "pure right" was found to be impossible, the other abyss yawned and for the moment Louis was confronted with the, to him appalling, prospect of recalling Talleyrand. In the end it was found possible to avoid this; and a ministry was formed with General Dessoles, a distinguished soldier of proved loyalty and at the same time of liberal views, as President of the Council and Minister for Foreign Affairs. Decazes was recalled and took the portfolio of the Interior; de Serre, Louis, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, and Portal made up the ministry. Its character was definitely liberal and it derived its strength from the left-centre and left. It could also depend on the support of the *Doctrinaires*.

The Dessoles-Decazes ministry at once found itself divided into two camps. Dessoles, de Serre, and Louis accepted the full programme of the *Doctrinaires* and gave themselves over to a definitely liberal policy. Decazes, Portal, and Gouvion-Saint-Cyr cherished the old idea of facing both ways, of holding out hands, as the King had once said, to right and left, and believing that "whoso is not against us is with us". It is not an attitude that commends itself to modern political notions; but it was probably the only policy by which it was possible to govern France in 1819. Thus Decazes who had been the spur of the late ministry became the bridle of the new. While acquiescing in the liberal policy, he desired to retain the adherence of the right-centre. Almost at once it became apparent that, whatever their position in the Chamber, the ministry would have to reckon on open hostility in the House of Peers where the ultra-royalists were in a majority. Barthélemy (the hero of the Peace of Basle), now "more Royalist than the King himself," proposed a modification of the electoral law; and there was also factious opposition in the House of Peers to the financial proposals of the ministry. The King at once declared his determination to break down this opposition: "Cette majorité," he said, "je la briserai"; and he did so by the bold step of creating about sixty new peers (6 March). So early was the Government driven to the expedient of *coups d'état* which Richelieu had feared.

The way was now open for liberal measures, and a series of decrees was passed by which full liberty of the press was guaranteed. How far the ministry were drifting away from the policy of their predecessors may be gauged by recalling that Richelieu, from Aix-la-Chapelle, had denounced freedom of the press as "the Pandora's Box from which emerge all the calamities which desolate the Earth". The lid of that box was now agape and the ultra-royalists were horrified at the prospect. This measure was the special offspring of the *Doctrinaires* and the minister de Serre (a *Doctrinaire* himself) distinguished himself in the debates by a series of oratorical triumphs (1 May, 1819). Having gone so far in a liberal direction however, the ministry now showed that there was a limit beyond which they would decline to go. The extreme left clamoured for the extension of pardon to the traitors of the Hundred Days and to the regicides. This was flatly refused, and the ministry, hustled by the ultra-right on one side, began at the close of the year to be hustled by the ultra-left on the other.

The partial election of 1819 provided further reinforcements for the ultra-left; Grégoire, the "constitutional" bishop, was amongst those returned; it was one of the ironies of the political situation that a man who was a regicide in all but fact should have owed his election to extreme royalists. Supporters of the Government were by this time getting thoroughly frightened at the advance of extreme liberalism; the aspect of foreign affairs was also menacing, and it seemed improbable that the allies would refrain much longer from intervention in the internal affairs of France. Under these circumstances the moderate section of the ministry, now headed by Decazes, determined that an alteration in the electoral law was necessary. De Serre, aided by de Broglie, developed a scheme by which, it was hoped, a greater degree of stability would be secured. Its main feature was a hereditary House of Peers, a Chamber of Deputies numbering 456 with an age-limit of thirty years (the qualification being a payment of 600 francs in direct taxation), septennial Assemblies, and a double vote to the wealthier classes.

It was clear that this measure could not be carried without changes in the ministry for Dessoles, Saint-Cyr, and Louis were definitely hostile to it. Decazes made overtures to Royer-Collard, the most important of the *Doctrinaires*, and to his old chief Richelieu. Neither of them could be persuaded to join the government and when, in November, the three liberal members of the ministry resigned, their places were taken by Roy, La Tour-Maubourg, and Pasquier. The situation was reversed, the wind which had been abaft the liberals now blew fair for the reactionaries. The exclusion of Grégoire from the Chamber was carried, and de Serre's scheme for electoral reform was modified in a sense favourable to the *Ultras*. The ministry was now in a very difficult position; without conciliating the extreme right it had irritated the extreme left. Would it be able to carry the electoral law? All depended on de Serre, the true author of the scheme and the only man whose eloquence might prevail in the Chamber; and just at the most critical moment de Serre's health broke down and he had to leave Paris (January, 1820). Robbed of this almost indispensable support, the ministers prepared to introduce the scheme on 14 February, 1820, when a blow fell upon them and upon France which entirely altered the political situation. On the night of 13 February, the Duc de Berry, son of the Comte d'Artois and heir-presumptive to the throne, was assisting his wife into her carriage at the entrance of the opera house when he was attacked by a labouring man called Louvel, who seems to have been a mere fanatic and without accomplices; the duke was mortally wounded and died a few hours later. After this tragic event the ministry could hardly have hoped to stand. The *Ultras* did not hesitate to attribute the calamity to the liberalism of recent legislation. There was even a base attempt to implicate Decazes. The royalist journals gave vent to an unbridled display of malice: "Almost all France was the accomplice of the murder," said one, and Chateaubriand spoke of Decazes as "slipping in a pool of blood". The bereaved father, to his eternal shame, attempted to make political capital out of his son's death. He went in person to the King and demanded the dismissal

of Decazes as the price of the support of the ultra-right. The King clung to his friend, and Decazes himself displayed the utmost dignity in conditions which were not only trying but dangerous. The ministry brought forward proposals, exceptional laws as they were called, for the suspension of the liberty of the press, and for the establishment of certain arbitrary powers to prevent a repetition of such crimes. It was also determined to proceed with the electoral law. The left-centre demurred; and a coalition between it and the right placed the ministry in a minority. Decazes now urged the recall of Richelieu as the only way out of the dilemma; that is he advised a complete surrender to the demands of the *Ultras*. Artois promised the support of the right to a Richelieu ministry provided it did not include Decazes. Decazes saw that he himself must be sacrificed if the situation was to be saved. Richelieu hesitated; he did not desire office, and there were rumours of a Talleyrand ministry. It was possibly the prospect of the return of *ce Talleyrand* that persuaded the King to accept Richelieu and sacrifice Decazes. For this was the first stipulation made by Richelieu. He saw that so long as Decazes remained in office, the right would refuse its support; and without its support it was impossible for any ministry to command a majority. With the profoundest grief Louis parted with his friend; he created him a duke and appointed him ambassador to England.

Richelieu's second ministry comprised Siméon, Mounier, Pasquier, and Portalis (the latter as *locum tenens* for de Serre). Never was ministry in a more miserable situation. Tolerated rather than welcomed, it lived by the support of the centre; no measure it could propose but would rouse the hostility of either the right or the left. As de Broglie said,<sup>1</sup> "the merest breath would upset it". The *Doctrinaires* indeed continued ostensibly to support the ministry, but only because they dared not contemplate the consequences of its downfall. Their convictions obliged them to oppose the "exceptional laws" which Richelieu now reintroduced. The left, under the able leadership of General Foy, attacked the proposals

<sup>1</sup> "Souvenirs (1785-1870) du feu Duc de Broglie" (ed. 1886), II. 130.

fiercely, while the right gave them a grudging and precarious support. A revised electoral law was next introduced; the age-limit was reduced, and an elaborate double system of election devised, which had the effect of identifying landed property with political power. This was a distinctly reactionary step, and the left, supported by Royer-Collard, protested loudly, while the ultra-right growled at its insufficiency. De Serre, by this time a dying man, bravely returned to Paris to lend his support to the unpopular measure. He now regarded the left as the enemy. His attack on Lafayette was terrible in its sarcasm and also in its justice. The political struggle and the execution of the assassin Louvel were the causes of considerable disorder, which was fomented by the left but treated with commendable firmness by the Government. At last the electoral law was passed, though only by small majorities and in an amended form. The session ended on 22 July. The Government had just managed to hold its own by reliance on the right, and the extreme right had actually voted with the extreme left on the electoral law.

Meanwhile their royalist proclivities had caused the ministry to break with the *Doctrinaires*, most of whom (for de Serre could no longer be considered a *Doctrinaire*) were dismissed from the Council of State and went more or less definitely into opposition. At the same time an era of plots and conspiracies was inaugurated by the extreme left, the most serious of which, a military plot which aimed at the overthrow of the dynasty, was discovered in good time by the authorities. D'Argenson, Manuel, and Lafayette were amongst those implicated, but the Government refrained from prosecuting them (August, 1820). The birth of a posthumous son (the Duke of Bordeaux) to the Duchess of Berry on 29 September gave fresh heart to the ultra-royalists, and a royal proclamation was issued urging the nomination of royalist deputies for the autumn elections. The result was a Chamber of overwhelming royalist propensities. The counter-revolution might be said to be in full swing. Lainé, Villèle, and Corbière, all extreme royalists, were introduced into the ministry, and Châteaubriand was sent as ambassador to Berlin.

Even this, however, did not satisfy the extremists whose motto continued to be, "All or Nothing".

While the political life of the nation was in this deplorable condition, its material condition was daily improving. The credit due to the Richelieu ministry for this, and for its reasonable attitude in foreign affairs, should not be obscured by the miserable expedients to which it was driven by the exigencies of party politics. The details of the foreign complications which now arose owing to revolutionary outbreaks in Spain, Naples, and the Ottoman Empire, can be more conveniently treated in the period after the close of Richelieu's ministry when they actually came to a head. It suffices to say that Richelieu, in the conferences of Troppau and Laibach (1820-1), adhered with considerable success to Talleyrand's policy of claiming for France a voice in the councils of Europe. But the ultra-royalists were not satisfied with this; they desired that France should take a line of her own in foreign policy, and thought that she should intervene, even without the assistance of the other Powers, to prevent Ferdinand VII of Spain suffering the fate of Louis XVI. They raised a factious opposition to the ministry. The partial election of 1821<sup>1</sup> brought them new recruits. They presented an insolent address to the King in which they demanded a more vigorous and "honourable" foreign policy, and the fulfilment of the promises of the charter. They were in fact playing for the support of the left, and were successful in securing that of Royer-Collard and the left-centre. Against this combination the ministry could not stand. Richelieu, in an interview with Artois, made a last effort to hold him to the promise of support which he had given him when he took office. But Artois had only wanted Richelieu to serve his own ends, as a transition minister. The time was now ripe for a real ultra-royalist minister, and Villèle, the ablest and most capable of the *Ultras*, was Artois' nominee.

Richelieu's ministry resigned on 12 December, 1821, and with it ended the period of government by one or other

<sup>1</sup> I.e. the replacement by election of the deputies who retired under the Constitution.



group of the centre ; power had passed from the left-centre to the right-centre with the fall of Decazes ; with the fall of Richelieu it passed to the right. We have been so much concerned with the difficulties and failures of the ministries of the centre that we should take special note of their remarkable success. Materially France had prospered ; her industries had revived ; order had been secured ; the army had been put on a fresh footing ; the finances of the country had been wonderfully re-established, and France had recovered much of her standing among the nations. Both Decazes and Richelieu and many of their colleagues had been excellent administrators and sound statesmen ; it was as politicians that they failed, and if they failed it was in face of overpowering difficulties. We now enter a fresh period. Power falls to ministers with quite other ideals ; ideals much simpler and much more deliberate. Let us understand the policy of the ultra-royalists before we embark on the story of their period of power.

From the first moment of the restoration this party had determined what the restoration ought to mean : vengeance on the Revolution and all its works, and a reconstitution of the conditions of the *ancien régime*. This had been their ideal in 1814 ; it was their ideal now ; for it was to them rather than to the Bourbons that the epigram applied that they had "learnt nothing and forgotten nothing". Once more in 1821 they had it in their power to apply their solution to the political situation. There were two special ways in which they hoped to facilitate that solution : by rehabilitating the Catholic religion and cementing the connexion between altar and throne, and by adopting a bolder line in foreign policy ; both these ideas were brought to fruition, and the "ultra" policy had a very fair measure of success. This, however, was largely due to the extreme ability with which Villèle, an exceedingly clever politician, played his cards. He sedulously exaggerated the importance of the numerous conspiracies by which the liberals sought to hamper the Government, and thus prolonged the exceptional conditions which had been first created by the assassination of the Duke

of Berry; and so, in spite of the fact that the new Chamber (that of 1822) was more liberal than the last, he was able to keep the liberals in absolute check. Before the election there had been passed in the old Chamber (13 March, 1822) a law which placed the press completely under the censorship of the Government. A strong protective tariff on imported goods was passed in July, and a first step was taken towards the rehabilitation of religion by the exclusion of heretical teachers from the university and the multiplication of religious schools. It was now time to take the first step towards the realization of the second of the great "ultra" ideals, the introduction of a more warlike tone in foreign policy.

It is necessary to look back a little if we are to understand the condition of European affairs at this juncture. The Concert of the great Powers remained as it was left at Aix-la-Chapelle, the pivot on which everything revolved. That is to say Russia, Prussia, Austria, and in a very much more hesitating fashion England, remained in concert ostensibly for the purpose of watching France; but the three continental Powers, inspired by the enthusiasm of the Czar, desired to develop the operations of the united Powers, and to extend this tutelage to the whole of Europe for the maintenance of the *status quo* and the support of legitimate government. England, in a steadily increasing degree, opposed this extension of the scope of the Concert. France, on the other hand, was desirous of taking her place in it, and was not averse to the idea of a general tutelage of Europe. The condition of affairs in Spain, where Ferdinand VII was pursuing a policy more reactionary than was suggested even by the extremest *Ultras* in France, excited considerable anxiety; a revolution broke out in 1820, and in the same year a similar outbreak occurred in Naples, where Ferdinand VII's uncle, Ferdinand I, ruled as King of the Two Sicilies. Here were two cases in which, if the general alliance of Europe was to be more than a sham, the intervention of Europe was called for. Two Powers were specially interested, Austria in the affairs of Naples, and France in the affairs of Spain. A fresh conference was summoned to Troppau in October, 1820, and Austria, Russia, and Prussia signed a

protocol to the effect that the united Powers claimed a right to interfere in "States which have undergone a change of government due to revolution, the results of which threaten other States". England stood out, and France signed only with certain reservations. The conference adjourned to meet at Laibach in January, 1821; and an invitation was sent to Ferdinand of Naples to attend. Metternich used all his ingenuity to get England to throw in her lot with the other Powers, but unsuccessfully; Lord Stewart, the English plenipotentiary, remained absolutely firm and the Concert of Europe seemed likely to break up, when events happened which modified the attitude of the dissenting Powers.

A great outbreak of revolt occurred in 1821 in the Ottoman Empire. In this matter it would have suited Russia to act alone and ignore the Concert of which she had been the creator. England and Austria, both of whom were deeply interested in the maintenance of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire, were naturally opposed to any such isolated action on the part of Russia, and England at once began to use the very plea from which she had so obstinately dissented: in other words she displayed a tendency to acknowledge the general alliance. About the same time the downfall of Richelieu and the formation of the ultra-royalist Villèle ministry in France gave a great impetus to the policy of intervention in Spain. This in turn reacted on the relations between France and England. Hitherto England and France had tended to act together in opposition to Prussia, Austria, and Russia; they now began to drift apart.

In the year 1822 the statesmen of Europe once more assembled, on this occasion at Verona, to discuss the European situation. The question which overshadowed all others was that of Spain. To the proposal for concerted interference in this quarter England opposed an uncompromising resistance. Montmorency, the French plenipotentiary, had instructions to indicate that France was prepared to move in this direction even if she did not receive the support of the Powers. Austria, Prussia, and Russia gave Montmorency formal assurance of their countenance and assistance. England declined to give

any such assurance. In the spring of 1823 the Duc d'Angoulême led a French army of 95,000 men across the Pyrenees, the three great continental Powers approving while Great Britain dissented. The action of France had put an end to the Concert of Europe. The French had an easy triumph in Spain. The policy, long advocated by Châteaubriand, and which he himself had brought to fruition, proved a triumphant success.<sup>1</sup> Fired by this success, the extreme royalists now clamoured for a forward foreign policy at every possible opportunity. Alarmed at their clamour, Villèle, who was not fully in sympathy with the ultra-warlike party, dismissed Châteaubriand (June, 1824), and set himself to the consolidation of the ministerial power at home.

He believed that the time had come for drastic measures, and his first proceeding was to destroy the liberal tendencies of the peers by a *fournée* of fresh creations (December, 1823), and he next proceeded to the dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies. The accuracy of his political judgment was vindicated in the elections which ensued. The liberals were almost completely eliminated. Villèle's next step was to introduce a septennial act, which, in the absence of free criticisms and ministerial responsibility, seemed to assure him of power for a period of seven years. Thus armed, he applied himself to the great questions which had long exercised the minds of royalist ministers, the questions, that is, of compensation for the *émigrés* and the rehabilitation of the Church. With regard to the first of these questions, the charter, it is true, had guaranteed undisturbed possession to the holders of national property. But was it not possible, without interfering with that possession, to find other means of compensating the royalists for the losses, grievous and unjust, that they had suffered in the Revolution? The government of Louis XVIII had had one great merit—that it had rehabilitated the finances and re-established prosperity; might it not claim the right to

<sup>1</sup> Châteaubriand had replaced Montmorency in the ministry and was personally responsible for the opening of hostilities; "the object of the war," he said, "was to revive the old glory of the Bourbons, and to make the princes of that house complete heirs of Henry IV" (14 May, 1823).

use some part of this prosperity for an act of reparation to its loyal supporters? It was in such a light that the question presented itself to Villèle and his colleagues. The method he proposed to adopt was an ingenious, if not altogether an honest, one. The actual *biens nationaux* were not to be touched, but an annual saving of 28,000,000 *livres* was to be effected by the reduction of the interest on the national debt, and on the security so created 1,000,000,000 francs were to be raised which were to be used for the compensation of the *émigrés*. In plain words the fund-holders were to be robbed to that extent for the benefit of those who had suffered in the Revolution. The little band of liberals in the Chamber energetically denounced the proposal, but it was carried on 4 May, 1824, only, however, to be rejected by the Peers on 3 June. Villèle's political judgment had failed him in the end. He had not estimated at its true worth the hostility of Châteaubriand and his following, who were so angry at Villèle's rejection of the warlike policy that they had determined to wreck the government at all costs. Measures which, in the spring of 1824, Villèle proposed for placing the control of religious houses in the discretion of the Crown were also rejected by the Peers. Such was the state of affairs when it became apparent that Louis XVIII's life was drawing to an end. All the summer of 1824 he was very ill, and on 15 September he breathed his last. The reign had been peaceful and prosperous, and Louis has been applauded for having been the only one of the three brothers to die upon the throne. His qualities had no doubt been somewhat negative, and much of his success was due to the wisdom of Richelieu and Decazes. But he was a man of unfailing good sense and must in justice share the praise with his ministers. Duvergier de Hauranne, who calls him the least honest of the three brothers, thinks that he would have failed in 1789 but succeeded in 1830. His description of Louis as Charles II to Charles X's James II is as acute as it is just.<sup>1</sup>

The accession of the Comte d'Artois as Charles X gave a fresh turn to events and one which, it must be remembered,

<sup>1</sup> Duvergier de Hauranne, *op. cit.* VIII. 100.

had long been looked forward to. The extraordinary conduct of the extreme royalists during the reign of Louis XVIII is explained when we realize that they looked upon that king as little more than a warming-pan for his brother. Charles X was a very different man from Louis XVIII. He was more honest, much more simple, and much more bigoted. His early career did not reflect much credit on him: at the Court of Louis XVI he had been associated with all the wildest pranks of Marie Antoinette; had played the part of a careless, extravagant, and flashy courtier; and had had a large share in the intrigues which split the Court in those critical moments into two parties. Upon the fall of the Bastille he had emigrated, first to Turin, then to Coblenz, and in 1793 to Russia. In 1795 he had taken his courage in his hands and landed at the Île de Yeu to assist the Vendean rebellion.<sup>1</sup> His withdrawal a few days later left him open to accusations of cowardice. From that date until his brother's accession he had found a refuge in England. Charles X has not been without his admirers. Leopold I, King of the Belgians, for instance (in a letter to Queen Victoria) describes him as an honest man, a kind friend, an honourable master, sincere in his opinions and inclined to do everything that is right;<sup>2</sup> but he acknowledges at the same time that he was blinded by "certain absolute ideas". Honesty may be akin to stupidity, kindness a near neighbour to infatuation, and sincerity half-sister to bigotry. His absolute ideas would not perhaps have injured Charles X had he had any conception of employing absolute powers for the benefit of France. Unfortunately he had no such conception. His one idea was to restore as far as possible the conditions of the *ancien régime*, to revive the insignia of monarchy, to reward the *émigrés*, to rehabilitate the Church, to obliterate all recollection of the Revolution and the Empire. With the accession of Charles X we are therefore—so far as constitutional policy is concerned—back at the 1814 stage.

The project for the compensation of the *émigrés* was at

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, III. 55, 56.

<sup>2</sup> "Letters of Queen Victoria" (ed. 1907), I. p. 67.

once revived (certainly Charles was a "loyal master"). By April, 1825, the measure rejected in the previous year had become law, and the ministry was free to turn its attention to the needs of religion, that other sufferer by the Revolution. The rejected bill dealing with religious foundations was reintroduced, and it likewise passed both houses and became law: at the same time a drastic "law of sacrilege" was passed. Charles X now caused the sacred ampulla to be "rediscovered" (it had been destroyed in the Revolution), and was crowned at Reims on 29 May, 1825. The Bourbon dynasty was once more united to the Church. Villèle next attempted to interfere with the provisions of the Civil Code and to re-establish in a certain degree the principle of primogeniture. It is difficult to say that it was unwise to try and prevent the continual sub-division of properties; but the proposal alarmed many people and provoked determined opposition in the House of Peers. The secret readmission of the Jesuits increased this alarm, and it became necessary to attempt to stiffen the press law. But once more the peers intervened.

All this undisguised and impolitic violence evoked signs of popular discontent which should have warned the King and the ministry of the danger of the path they were treading. Compromise, however, was a word without meaning for Charles X. He was a man with a single end and a determination to pursue it by the straightest path. It was now a mere trial of strength. The *garde nationale*, which had showed signs of disaffection, was disbanded, and the rejected censorship imposed by royal ordinance (24 June, 1827). To all appearances the rule of *bon plaisir* had been restored and was likely to triumph. Once more the extreme royalists played the part of serpents in the grass. Châteaubriand and his group remained violently antagonistic to Villèle and ready to wreck the Government at any cost. To these men it appeared—and not without justification—that Villèle was neglecting opportunities for the rehabilitation of France by war; they believed that public opinion was on their side and were willing to release the winds in the belief that, once

loosed, they would blow favourably ; in other words they were ready to unchain public opinion ; Villèle responded to the attacks of these irreconcilable royalists by dissolving the Chamber (November, 1827) and nominating seventy-six new peers. He had misjudged the situation. The elections were unfavourable to him ; and on 5 December, 1827, he resigned. He had been defeated by a coalition of the two extreme parties.

Charles X was confronted with a deadlock. The coalition was powerful only for destruction. It could not have formed a ministry, yet it could make any other ministry impossible. The most obvious course was to turn to the extreme royalists ; but Charles decided to appoint Martignac, who was little more than an echo of Villèle, and to propitiate the liberals. Inadequate modifications were introduced into the Press Law (April, 1828) ; and in June two ordinances restricting the operations of the Jesuits and those of the smaller ecclesiastical seminaries. The result of these half-measures was simply the alienation of the extreme right ; as for the liberals—"in vain is the net spread in the sight of the bird"—they saw through the insincerity of Martignac's measures and declined to be propitiated, demanding a revision of the electoral law which should free them from their unnatural dependence on the extreme right. But neither Charles X nor Martignac was prepared for such a step. Martignac drew a red herring across the scent by offering local government on a liberal franchise, but refused to interfere with the law which governed the elections to the Chamber. It was a clever diversion but it failed to deceive the liberals, and gave grievous umbrage to the extreme right ; the proposals had to be withdrawn (April, 1829). It was clear that Martignac's policy of balancing between the two extreme parties had failed. Temporization as a method of government had been found wanting. Charles X must decide whether he would govern with a liberal or a reactionary minister. The King was wholly antipathetic to the idea of liberalism, and had now no hesitation in resorting to the extreme right ; on 9 August, 1829, the Prince de Polignac, ambassador in London, was invited to



form a ministry. The period of concession was at an end. Polignac had no idea save that of government by *coups d'état*; "A majority," he said, "I don't want one; I shouldn't know what to do with it". He took office with the intention of giving expression to the policy of reaction, but without any clear idea of how this was to be done. When he heard of the appointment Royer-Collard exclaimed: "Then Charles X is still the Comte d'Artois"; it had taken some time to convince him of a fact which was only too obvious. Polignac revived Châteaubriand's idea of a forward foreign policy, and when he found it impossible to create a European embroglio, he made elaborate preparations for a French intervention in Algiers, where the Bey had refused to make reparation for insults to the French ambassador. The Algerian expedition was hotly opposed by England, and there was a distinct coolness between France and England, balanced by a *rapprochement* between France and Russia.

The moderate royalists, at the head of whom was Royer-Collard, saw that the time had come when they must show their strength; and a strongly worded address to the Crown was drawn up by Royer and carried by a majority of 221 to 181 (18 March, 1830). "France," it said, "does not desire anarchy any more than you desire despotism. You should have faith in her loyalty as she has in your promises." Charles X took this as the signal for hostilities. He at once dissolved the Chamber and ordered new elections (16 May, 1830). He had misjudged the feeling of the country. The new Chamber was even more hostile to the ministry than the old. Charles dissolved it before it had even met, and introduced measures to stifle the press and to revise the electoral law. The era of government by *coup d'état* was in full swing. The King was confident in the success of his plans. The ministers, who seem to have been completely misinformed and who justified the remark (of the English ambassador) that "to enter the ministry of foreign affairs was to enter Milton's Fools' Paradise," did not anticipate much opposition, and took no special precautions to meet it. There was considerable ferment in Paris on 26 July, which should have warned them; but it

was only on the evening of the 27th, when the insurrection had reached formidable dimensions and was being directed by a group of liberal deputies, chief of whom was Casimir Périer, that Polignac thought it necessary to invest Marmont with military powers to repress it. Then for three days the struggle was fought out in the streets of Paris. The Hôtel de Ville was taken and retaken; and on the 29th the insurrectionaries forced Marmont to evacuate the city. Charles X had had no inkling of the gravity of the crisis, and when the news of the evacuation of Paris was brought to him at St. Cloud he was overcome with astonishment. He revoked the ordinances and dismissed the ministry. But it was now too late; the revolutionaries had already taken the first steps to set up a new government independent of Charles X. The King left St. Cloud and betook himself to Trianon. He first thought of isolating Paris and appealing to France, next of abdicating in favour of the Duke of Bordeaux and appointing Orleans Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom. It was all to no purpose. Orleans was already established in Paris, with the crown in his grasp. On 18 August Charles X reached Cherbourg, and soon afterwards he was established at Holyrood, where it may be hoped he found more contentment than the princess of an earlier era who also came to Scotland from France and whose memories haunt that palace. Charles X was the victim of sheer gross stupidity and obstinacy. He had decreed a *coup d'état* without the means to carry it out. He might never have lost his throne but for his incredible ill-luck in stumbling on a minister as stupid and as obstinate as himself.

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## CHAPTER XXXVI

### THE ORLEANS MONARCHY

(1830-1848)

WITH the third downfall of the Bourbons, in July, 1830, the government of Kings by divine right ended. Recollections of the Terror forbade recourse to a republic; experience of Charles X gave a strong distaste for absolutism. By this process of elimination the victors of the Revolution of July were driven back on limited monarchy—monarchy, that is, not of right but by popular or at least by pseudo-popular consent. At first there had been a menace of republicanism from the forces that had been let loose in order to effect the overthrow of the Bourbons. The leaders of the middle-class, and essentially aristocratic, party which had promoted the Revolution had considerable difficulty in restraining their republican allies. To this party, which had inherited the views and traditions of the *Doctrinaires* and of which Guizot was the leader, nothing could have been more alarming than the prospect of a democratic constitution. It had only been with extreme reluctance that they had abandoned the Bourbon monarchy; Guizot even moved (on 28 July) an address of loyalty to the King and Charter; a step which was intended to show that the quarrel had not been with monarchy but with the abuses of monarchy. The more active politicians of the same party, including Thiers and Talleyrand, were already negotiating with the Duke of Orleans, Louis Philippe, the son of Philippe Égalité, and on 31 July the *Corps Législatif* appointed that prince Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom—a step which was quickly followed as we shall see by the offer and acceptance of the crown.

Louis Philippe was now a man of fifty-seven, of a somewhat *banal* appearance and homely manners, which caused him to resemble a mayor rather than a monarch; he was thus well suited by temperament and exterior to be the figurehead of a bourgeois monarchy. Intellectually, if not a profound, he was an extremely subtle, thinker; eminently qualified therefore to balance nicely between reaction and revolution: it was largely by his own finesse that he was able for eighteen difficult years to dance without mishap among political eggs. Still when all is said, he was little more than a political juggler of great dexterity; he embodied none of the ideals of the French race, and merely kept that country untrue to herself for an unconscionable time by the exercise of his unquestionable ingenuity.

Ostensibly popular both in its origin and its tradition, the Orleans monarchy quickly abjured its liberal rôle. Not only did it reign as the instrument of an aristocratic middle-class minority, denying the franchise to the masses, but in its later years it was illiberal in policy, and during the long ministry of Guizot there was little to distinguish its rule from that of Charles X; so untrue was Louis Philippe to the ideals of his father and to the principles which had placed him on the throne. But this was by no means the worst offence of the Orleans monarchy; it might have been untrue to the recent Orleans tradition and yet have served the best interests of the nation. But it was also untrue to the traditions of France, and, as profoundly as Charles X, it ignored, though in a different way, the lessons of the Revolution and the Empire. To cover its usurpation and to secure the approval of the Powers it withdrew from active intervention in European politics, assumed a position of detachment, and almost ceased for a time to have any external policy at all. This was profoundly antagonistic not only to the interests but to the spirit of France; moreover it was almost traitorous to those nations, such as Italy, Belgium, and Poland, which had been taught to look to France as the ever-ready champion of "liberty," and which had welcomed in the accession of the house of Orleans a return to the grand old propagandist days. The great drama

of the Revolution, which of course includes that of Napoleon I, had taught France to look upon herself both as a nation with a mission and also as a nation with an exalted standard of glory. From Napoleon she had learnt both the horrors of war and its compensating glories; hence that curious combination of the vibrating martial spirit with an obvious reluctance to embark on war, a lingering love of the arts and blessings of peace, which is characteristic of modern France. Louis Philippe heeded only one side, and that the least emphatic, in this combination; he pampered that love of peace which the true Frenchman knows in his heart is his weakness; and he ignored that devotion to glory which the same Frenchman recognizes as his strength and the true ideal of his race. Not that Louis Philippe forgot this latter side—he was far too astute to fall into such a mistake—but he thought that it was sufficient to do knee homage to this ideal. He refused a throne in Belgium; what throne under any circumstances would Napoleon have refused? In Egypt and Algeria he pursued a mean and inglorious policy. Only in his later years did he feel sufficiently secure to offend Europe by the prosecution of a clumsy forward policy in Spain; on the whole it may be said that his external policy or the absence thereof was a disillusionment and a disgrace which brought the blush to the cheeks of the nation. He “left out glory” from the national vocabulary, and for that he paid the inevitable penalty when he fled meanly and in disguise from the shores of his kingdom in 1848. The only cause for surprise is that the penalty should have been so long postponed; that a king who had so long flouted the national ideals should have kept his throne for a period of eighteen years.

From its very beginning the new Government was a sham and a compromise—an aristocratic creation with a democratic appearance, and when Louis Philippe agreed to put himself at the head of it he merely accepted a part in an elaborate and dangerous *masque*. The Lieutenant-General proceeded to the Hôtel de Ville (31 July) and there publicly embraced Lafayette, the typical bourgeois Republican. But the July Revolution was not in reality a triumph for the Republicans

but for the *Doctrinaire* Liberals. They had, it is true, received no popular mandate to draw up a new Constitution or even to revise the old ; but it was in their power to do so, and they did not hesitate to proceed to what was really an act of usurpation. A great reduction was made in the constitutional powers which had appertained to the monarchy, the exclusive initiative in legislation being taken from the Crown ; at the same time Catholicism was disestablished and the censorship suppressed.<sup>1</sup> Under these conditions Louis Philippe was raised

<sup>1</sup> *Constitutional Charter* of 7 August, 1830 (Hélie, "Les Constitutions de la France," p. 987).

The preamble of the existing Charter was revoked. The people were declared to be the one source of government. Louis Philippe was called to the throne, but was to be first invited to accept the Charter. Herein lay the difference between his position and that of Louis XVIII.

The following Rights were laid down :—

1. Equality before the law.
2. Proportionate equality before tax collector.
3. Equal eligibility for office.
4. Individual liberty.
5. Liberty of religion.
6. Endowment of Ministers of all cults.
7. Liberty of Press within the bonds of law. No censorship.
8. All properties (including national properties) inviolable.
9. Confiscation for public benefit with compensation.
10. Amnesty.
11. Conscription abolished.

The King was declared inviolable and the principle of responsibility of ministers was laid down. The King was given complete control of the Executive. Legislation was in the hands of King, Peers, and Deputies. Legislation could be initiated by the King or either of the Chambers. Financial measures had to be first voted by the Chamber of Deputies. If a law was rejected by either King, Peers, or Deputies it could not be revived in the same session.

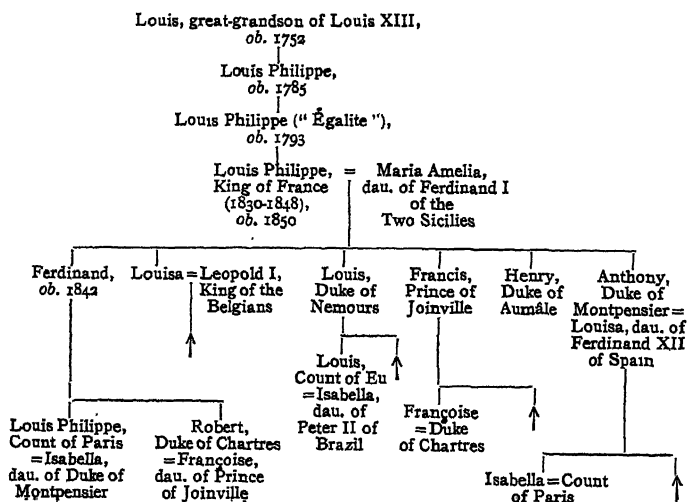
The Civil List was voted for the whole reign. The Peers (unlimited in number) were to be nominated by the King, and might be either hereditary or life peers. The Deputies were to be elected by electoral colleges for five years, the age limit for Deputies was thirty-five and for electors twenty-five. The debates were to be public. The King might prorogue or dissolve the Chambers but had to summon others within three months. Ministers could sit in either Chamber and had the entry of both. They could be impeached by the Deputies before the Peers. The Judges

to the throne and the experiment of a liberal monarchy, ruling by apparent consent and based on the support of the middle classes, commenced. The new monarchy soon proved itself as illiberal as the old; ostensibly it ruled by consent, but in fact Louis Philippe's great political astuteness made him by degrees, in fact if not in theory, largely independent of constitutional restrictions. The support of the middle classes, however, remained the great pillar of the throne, and it was only the withdrawal of that support that caused its ultimate downfall.

The troubles of the Orleans monarchy were not slow to

were to be nominated by the King and were not removable. Juries and the Civil Code were retained. Soldiers and pensioners were to retain their honours and pensions. The public debt was guaranteed; titles were retained; there were to be no exemptions from taxation; the Legion of Honour was preserved. The National Guard was appointed "protector of the Charter"; the only Cockade was to be the Tricolor. Charles X's peers were annulled.

#### GENEALOGICAL TABLE OF THE HOUSE OF ORLEANS





begin ; encouraged by recent events in France, the Belgians rose in revolt against their King. Republican opinion in France was quickly enflamed, and there arose a strong feeling that France should once more range herself on the side of liberty. The closing months of the year were marked by a great revival of Republican ideas and Louis Philippe had to bend before the storm. He parted with his ministers, Guizot and de Broglie, and made concessions to advanced opinion ; but he steadily refused to intervene in Belgium, and set himself against all attempts at violence. It was under these difficult conditions that he set the tone of his foreign policy. The events of July, 1830, had reawakened the fears, and at the same time the ambitions, of the European Powers, and they began once more to draw together against France. The Czar in particular, who desired to reap profit in the East, evinced the utmost coldness to the new monarchy. Louis Philippe took the judicious step of making advances to England. Talleyrand was dispatched as ambassador to London, and relations of close and increasing friendship were established between the two countries. Russia was compelled to abandon her aggressive intentions, and was very soon involved in internal trouble, the consequence of the national rising of the Poles which was in part at least traceable to inspiration from France. A somewhat similar rebellion broke out in Italy, so that in more directions than one there was material to inflame Republican feeling in Paris. It was only by his superb power of balance that Louis Philippe was able to save the situation. He refused for his son (the Duke of Nemours) the offer of the Belgian Crown ; and persisted in a policy of complete neutrality in Poland, Belgium, and Italy. Thus the desertion of oppressed peoples was absolute and complete. This was the price of peace. Peace, however, is almost inevitably popular, and it was as the preserver of peace that Louis Philippe was now able to consolidate his power by the recall of a conservative ministry under the leadership of Casimir Périer (13 March, 1831). The new prime minister, a representative of the views of the old *Doctrinaire* school, appealed to all but the most extreme shades

of opinion, by his ardent liberalism on the one hand and his profound regard for order on the other ; the period of his ministry is the great attempt to combine liberalism with absolutism. It was Casimir Périer who, in the pursuit of these ideals, completed Louis Philippe's abandonment of the revolutionary peoples, confirmed his overtures for European peace, and initiated schemes for the reorganization of the army and the improvement of education. In the midst of this activity the minister was carried off by the cholera which was then ravaging Western Europe (16 May, 1832). Louis Philippe, who, ostensibly constitutionalist though he was, was at heart an absolutist with a strong desire to rule, had already come to resent the attempt of the *Doctrinaires* to dominate politics and interfere with his freedom of action. He had, it is true, profited by their support in the crisis of July, 1830, but he was by no means dependent upon them ; and on the death of Casimir Périer he refused for a time to summon to power his obvious successor, Guizot, and during the autumn of 1832 governed personally through ministers of his own choice. It was a period of great unrest. In June there was an outbreak of Republican violence occasioned by the funeral of one of the Republican leaders, General Lamarque. This was only suppressed by the personal intervention of the King (who was by no means a coward)<sup>1</sup> and the military ; a second menace came from the direction of the Bourbons ; the Duchesse de Berry had landed at Marseilles in April and had proceeded to Nantes in the hope of rousing the West. It was not until November that she was arrested. Her conspiracy had been more irritating than dangerous, for the trend of public opinion was towards Bonapartism rather than Legitimism. Fed by the carefully engineered Napoleonic legend, that opinion was veering back to the house which had identified itself with a glorious foreign policy. It received, however, a crushing blow from the death of the only son of Napoleon I, the

<sup>1</sup> Thiers called the King a poltroon in talking to Greville. He was perhaps in later life a moral, never a physical, coward. At any rate, he had such a hatred for disorder and war that he appeared sometimes a moral coward (Greville, "Papers," vi. 29).

Duke of Reichstadt, whom we have known as King of Rome (22 July, 1832). For the moment both the Legitimists and the Bonapartists were without a leader; the immediate danger to the Orleans monarchy came from the Republicans. During the autumn and winter of 1832, and the whole of 1833, all Louis Philippe's ingenuity was taxed to meet the new ascendancy of Republicanism. In October he formed a coalition ministry, under the leadership of Marshal Soult,<sup>1</sup> which included the most prominent members of the Périer Cabinet, and in which Guizot was Minister for Education. Guizot is the statesman who is most closely identified with the Orleans regime. There is a certain congruity in this, for in many ways he reflected the weaknesses of the monarchy which he served. Like that monarchy he was essentially *bourgeois*, leaning on the middle-class and distrusting the people. His famous phrase *Enrichissez-vous* embodies in two words his political ideals. It is natural to compare him with his contemporary and rival, Thiers. Both won eminent positions in the literary world, but that of Guizot had more justification than that of Thiers. Both were ambitious, but the ambition of Guizot was of a nobler type than that of Thiers. Both lived to a great old age, Guizot in retirement, Thiers increasingly in the world of politics. The latter in fact was far more of a politician than the former, who had none of the political *fleur* and prescience which distinguished his rival. Nor had Guizot any of the delight in public life or the insatiable curiosity which give piquancy to the character of Thiers. Where Thiers was gay to the verge of levity Guizot was serious almost to solemnity. There was in fact a certain solemnity in all that Guizot did, that is uncongenial to the French temperament, and that gave the impression of inflexibility. He was a Protestant of austere character, and had a certain rigid nobility, which was reflected

<sup>1</sup> The Soult ministry of 11 October, 1832:—

Soult.

de Broglie—Foreign Office.

Thiers—Interior.

Guizot—Education.

Hermann—Finance.

in his personal appearance. Such a character, honest and unblemished, commands respect. Guizot's failure was not due to any vice of character but to the fact that, while to a great extent he reflected the spirit of the Orleans monarchy, he did not reflect the spirit of France.

To Soult's ministry it fell to deal with the recrudescence of Republicanism. It showed some courage in dealing with Belgian matters, firmness in the matter of the Duchesse de Berry, and liberalism in Guizot's reform of education, while Thiers' famous scheme for the alleviation of unemployment by public works on a grand scale—he proposed 100,000,000 *livres* in five years—showed that the Government was alive to the economic situation, though not prepared to deal with it scientifically. The economic and industrial changes which took place during this period in Western Europe, owing to the rapid march of discovery and invention, quickly began to tell on the political situation, and the Republican party began to identify itself with the policy of social reform.

The Ministers, however, showed a resolute front ; indeed they erred in the direction of excessive severity. Strikes were repressed by the employment of the military, and at Lyons there was considerable bloodshed ; industrial unrest in fact was treated as if it were political revolt. An abortive insurrection in Paris was quickly suppressed and in May, 1835, 164 leading Republicans were brought to trial. Louis Philippe did not associate himself with this policy of repression. He was extremely jealous of the Soult ministry, believing that it had arrogated power to itself which more properly belonged to the Crown. He set himself, therefore, to the congenial task of undermining his own ministry, and lent his support to the body of malcontents which now formed what was called the "Third Party".

The irresistible national impulse towards a strong foreign policy now impelled even the peace-pledged government of Soult to more vigorous action abroad. The affairs of the East were embroiled by the revolt of Mehemet Ali against the Sultan. De Broglie, the Foreign Minister, trusted to England (with which country Louis Philippe had established relations

of a cordial character) to look after the interests of France in this quarter; Talleyrand and the King, however, concerted a new foreign policy, which involved a *rapprochement* with Austria, and thus the King and his ministers found themselves working for divergent ends. There was only one possible outcome; on 4 February, 1836, the ministry resigned.

Thiers, who had broken with his colleagues, now took office, and it is time to take stock of this remarkable man, who was a minister at thirty-five and a dictator at seventy-five, and who, for all his weaknesses, more truly than any of his contemporaries reflected the France of his period. Thiers was a Marseillais journalist of Greek extraction. His personal appearance was singular: very short in stature and very short-sighted, he had none of the orator's presence; nor had he the orator's voice: the unrivalled influence that he enjoyed over assemblies was derived from other sources, from his unfailing lucidity, from the real acuteness of his intellect, and from the impression of surpassing shrewdness—well justified in fact—that he managed to convey. He had a copious fund of language, which degenerated at times into woful prolixity both in public and in private; but his greatest gifts were this uncanny shrewdness which found expression in his twinkling eyes, an untiring industry which gave him time to be a prolific writer as well as a public man, a fearlessness of responsibility which was almost impudent, a penetrating curiosity, which old age did not diminish, and above all a political instinct which recalls Mirabeau. That he was an unscrupulous party man, a self-seeker, and that his temper was petulant, he would probably not have troubled to deny: to say that he was incurably vain is perhaps only another way of describing his superb self-reliance. Thiers has had his violent detractors and his whole-hearted admirers. De Remusat classed him with Henry IV, Colbert and Voltaire as one of the great men who have saved the honour of France. Perhaps he really was so; we are too near to judge, but we can at least see that he had a place in the political world above all his contemporaries, and his greatest vindication is the fact, which no detractor can alter, that it was to him

that his country instinctively turned in the terrible crisis of 1871.

Thiers at once began to introduce a certain firmness into French foreign policy. In particular, he began to show antagonism to England, whose friendship had hitherto been the great support of the Orleans monarchy. He also attempted to push Louis Philippe into active intervention in Spain, where dynastic troubles seemed to give an opportunity. Louis Philippe, to whom any such action was not only distasteful but profoundly dangerous, used all his subtlety to thwart the policy of his minister, with the result that in August, 1836, Thiers resigned. The King patched up relations with Guizot, who now took office as Prime Minister, but the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was placed, by royal influence, in the hands of Count Molé, a royal nominee whose sympathies were with the King rather than with the ministry. The King's government was now conducted by a Cabinet divided against itself, a state of affairs which was bound soon to end in disaster. It was only Molé's great skill as an opportunist (using that word in its best sense) that enabled the government to be carried on. The old party distinctions were in fact breaking down. The Republican was no longer what he had been, he was leaving the turgid shibboleths of 1793 for the great doctrines of Social Reform, while the Legitimists, under the influence of Lammenais, were ceasing to be *émigrés* and inclined to identify themselves with the new monarchy; it was Molé's policy to make overtures to both. He offered on the one hand an amnesty to the outlawed Republicans and on the other a fresh instalment of religious toleration. By this policy of diplomatic concession he procured political peace for two prosperous years (1837-9), during which France enjoyed the novel experience of a Government that actually governed. Side by side with conciliation went progress; it was an epoch of great industrial and economic change, and the ministry threw itself heartily into the development of the railway system, only to be coldly rebuffed by the Chamber, which was at heart too political to care for anything outside politics. For the first time since the catastrophe which closed

the Napoleonic era the finances of France were found to be on a solid footing. The national credit revived, prosperity prevailed, and national economic development became once more possible. Under these happy conditions politics seemed likely to recede into the background.

The colonial enterprise in Algiers, which had been for years in abeyance owing to the jealousy of England, was now at last also proceeded with. To Molé belongs the credit of finally establishing France on the southern shore of the Mediterranean in the face of much opposition. The capture of Constantine (12-13 October, 1837) gave a fresh importance to the Algerian question and showed that France, under her new Government, was going to make a reality of the occupation of that country. Yet, in spite of the completion of this remarkable and novel colonial development, and in spite of its many diplomatic successes, in Belgium where the independence of the country was secured (19 April, 1839), in Italy where a similar freedom was established up to the Austrian frontiers, and in Greece where French policy was instrumental in procuring for the new King, Otto, the opportunity of developing his kingdom, it was the accusation of weakness in foreign policy that ruined Molé's government. That government more than any of his reign was the personal government of Louis Philippe. The voice was the voice of Molé, but the hands were those of the King, and those hands unfortunately were totally unfitted to guide France through anything more than a temporary crisis. Already Louis Philippe had served his purpose. His ultimate downfall was becoming yearly more certain. The crisis of 1830 had been one which demanded a stopgap, and Louis Philippe's throne never really had the elements of permanence. It is this that accounts for the otherwise unaccountable fact that a government such as that of Molé, which secured to the country such a measure of prosperity and progress and exhibited so successful a diplomacy, was unable to maintain itself in office.

Molé's overthrow was compassed by an unscrupulous coalition between the two party leaders, Thiers and Guizot, united

only in their determination to make an end of what they rightly maintained was the personal government of Louis Philippe. Such a coalition could not have succeeded had it not represented a sentiment that was profoundly embedded in the French national character, the spirit of quixotism, demanding not a reasoned diplomacy but a forward foreign policy. After prolonged and bitter struggles in the Chamber an appeal was made to the electors in March, 1839, and the result was a decisive verdict against Molé, in other words against Louis Philippe. But the coalition, deadly as it had been in opposition, when its only business was to oppose, had not the elements of cohesion necessary to the formation of a government, and for two months there was an interregnum. The sands seemed to be running out for the July monarchy; the King's government was no longer carried on. Louis Philippe was only preserved by a premature and injudicious outbreak of insurrection headed by three extremists, Barbés, Blanqui, and Bernard, to whom the collapse of governmental institutions seemed to afford a welcome opportunity. An insurrection broke out on 12 May, 1839, and was only repressed with considerable difficulty by the military. This repression, however, was a salutary medicine for the politicians; on the day following Marshal Soult produced a list of ministers; Louis Philippe had triumphed.

It was at this juncture that foreign policy suddenly became so complicated as almost to involve France in war in spite of the pacific bias of the King. Ever since the disastrous expedition of Bonaparte, France had believed herself to have a special interest in the affairs of Egypt, and public opinion strongly favoured the independence of Mehemet Ali the Viceroy of that country. Palmerston's truculent diplomacy encouraged the Sultan to declare war on his troublesome subordinate, and in 1839 the East was ablaze, and the Sultan had received hard blows at the hands of Mehemet. England demanded reparation for her protégé, the Porte, while France urged the confirmation of Mehemet Ali in an independent kingdom. The *entente cordiale* which had been "the passport of the July monarchy at the European Courts"



was in jeopardy, and this jeopardy became much greater when, in July, 1840, England, Austria, Russia, and Prussia entered into a treaty for the support of the Sultan and the ejection of Mehemet Ali from Syria. France had been excluded from this arrangement; had not "left the Company," so the King of the Belgians expressed it, "but had been kicked out"; and she bitterly resented<sup>1</sup> the affront. Thiers, who had succeeded Soult, as Prime Minister in March, loudly voiced this resentment, and for the moment with a fire-eater at the helm in each state, Palmerston in England and Thiers in France, war seemed imminent. It was only the unshakable pacificity of Louis Philippe and the calm good sense of Queen Victoria and Melbourne that prevented this development. But so far as the Orleans monarchy was concerned this diplomatic triumph only filled its cup of shame to the brim; the more successful its policy, the more certain its downfall; such was the miserable position of the monarchy.

The year 1840 thus marks the first stage in the eight-year death-agony of the July monarchy. It had already outstayed its *raison d'être*, and it was only the middle-class fear of disturbance, combined with certain maladroit concessions on the part of the Government to the demand for a firmer foreign policy, together with the remarkable albeit shallow skill of Guizot, that preserved it, even after the humiliations of 1840, for a further period of eight years. Some notice must be taken of the changes and cross-currents that distinguish this peculiar period (1840). Economic progress continued, but tended to degenerate into a debauch of greed and speculation. Literary activity too was very great, and the works of Victor Hugo and Béranger helped to fan the martial spirit before which the July monarchy was almost visibly withering up. This martial revival was closely interwoven with the cult of the Napoleonic legend. Rostand, in his celebrated drama "L'Aiglon," puts into the mouth of Flambeau, the veteran of the great Napoleon's Old Guard

<sup>1</sup> "Letters of Queen Victoria," op. cit. i. 287. Louis Philippe's views on the crisis created by the Quadruple Treaty are expressed in a letter to the King of the Belgians. *Ibid.* i. 305.

the lines—"le roi, le roi même à cette heure (1830) n'existe qu'à la condition d'être bonapartiste".<sup>1</sup> This curious paradox was even more true in 1840 than in 1830. The July monarchy continued to perform a *crescendo* lip-service before the Napoleonic altar while doing violence at every point to the spirit of the Napoleonic legend. This culminated in the removal, on the initiative of the Government, of the remains of the Emperor from St. Helena to Paris. There they were received by the head of that dynasty which kept the nephew of the Emperor from his uncle's throne, and buried (15 December, 1840) in the Invalides. There was a certain ingenuity but even more childishness in this constant attempt to co-opt the glamour that hung round the name of Napoleon. The July monarchy was in fact not blind, only impotent. Louis Philippe throughout his reign realized the demand for vigour in foreign policy and also the impossibility of meeting it. He might begin a war of conquest; it would soon develop into a war of *propaganda*, and the first victim would be himself.<sup>2</sup>

Within the political arena, while these general tendencies prevailed outside, there was a re-arrangement of the old forces under somewhat new banners. The old Catholic or Church party for instance, flung away the fatal banner which had symbolized its subjection to the policy of the *ancien régime*. For the future, instead of remaining outside politics and asking for a political moon, it would fling itself into politics with the object of securing for religion, through the medium of education, a dominant position in the State. The Republican party on the other hand was more and more identifying itself with the cause of social reform, and taking up the gauntlet in the interests of the working classes.

Such were the lines on which political parties were developing, and round them continued to be heard the cries for social reform and a firm foreign policy. The Government, pledged and bound as it was to the anti-reforming middle class, committed as it was by the instinct of self-preservation to the

<sup>1</sup> "L'Aiglon," II. 10, 1.

<sup>2</sup> See "Letters of Queen Victoria," op. cit. I, 122.

unpopular policy of peace at any price, paid and could have paid no attention to either cry. For a time party politics ran riot, and all other issues seemed to be subordinated to the rivalry between Thiers and Guizot, the former coquetting with the Republican party and its leader Odilon Barrot, the latter making shy advances to the Catholic party. A Right of Search Convention among the European Powers was occupying the attention of the ministry and, when in December, 1841, Guizot agreed to a settlement which seemed somewhat unfavourable to France, he was forced by the opposition of Thiers to withdraw his proposals<sup>1</sup> and eat his words in the sight of all Europe. Guizot then turned to railway development as a means of popularizing his government, and it was while he was occupied in gigantic railway schemes that a catastrophe took place which brought the politicians temporarily to their senses. On 13 July, 1842, the Duke of Orleans, the heir to the throne, was thrown from his carriage and fractured his skull, with the immediate result that the whole basis of the July monarchy was exposed for discussion. Was it a continuation of the Bourbon monarchy, subject as that monarchy had been to the Salic Law, or was it an altogether new regime governed by laws of its own? Any such inquiry was dangerous to a monarchy whose bases were so ambiguous.

In face of the danger Guizot and Thiers decided to co-operate. The result was the Regency Bill, a document as ambiguous as the monarchy it was introduced to support. The Duke of Nemours, brother of the deceased prince, a man out of sympathy with liberal tendencies, was appointed Regent in the event of the King's death, to the exclusion of the more liberal widow. Thus, to propitiate the middle classes, the *ancien régime* was tacitly maintained. After this effort Thiers went into temporary retirement, and Guizot took advantage of the eclipse of his rival to make a grand attempt to revive the *entente cordiale* with England. The chief obstacle to this

<sup>1</sup> France, England, Austria, Prussia, and Russia were parties to the Convention. The limit on the number of cruisers enjoying right of search was removed; thus England with her superior fleet secured predominance.

was the part which France was forced by the "Movement" party to play in the affairs of Spain. There the question of the marriages of the youthful Queen Isabella and her sister, the Infanta Luisa Fernanda, transcended all others. Many were the suggested candidates for the hands of these two ladies; and the French Government put forward the claims of two of Louis Philippe's sons, the Dukes of Aumâle and Montpensier. After much negotiation and recrimination, during which the *entente cordiale* tottered on its foundations, the idea was abandoned. England was pacified and visits were exchanged between Queen Victoria and King Louis Philippe (September, 1843, and October, 1844).

Thiers was now busy attempting to undermine the *entente cordiale* in the hope that its downfall would carry Guizot with it. Not content with leading a party in France, this insatiable politician attempted to form one for himself in England; he was during this period in direct relations with Palmerston and the leading whigs. Guizot retaliated by developing his alliance with the Right. Educational concessions were made, which rallied the Catholic party to his side. He was dogged, however, by the continued need for a pusillanimous foreign policy, was obliged in face of the protests of England to abandon the annexation of Tahiti when the process had been half completed, and at the same time to draw back in Morocco. Not that either of these steps was unwise, but they were excellent material in the hands of that consummate politician Thiers. Thiers was by this time in definite alliance with the moderate Republicans or "parliamentary" Radicals, whose leader was Odilon Barrot. That is to say, bourgeois though he was and supporter of the bourgeois regime, he was prepared to extend the franchise in order to overthrow the Government. The activity and unscrupulousness of the opposition now forced Guizot into a step which was contrary to his policy; he was driven into an attempt to flout England, in order that he might take from Thiers' hand his sharpest weapon—the accusation of timidity in external affairs. Contrary to the assurances previously given, the duc de Montpensier was betrothed to the Infanta in October, 1846. Palmerston was driven into

fury, and only the sang-froid of Queen Victoria prevented a rupture; as it was the *entente cordiale* collapsed.

The opening of the year 1848 found the Orleans monarchy apparently more stable than ever; for seventeen years it had successfully ridden out all weathers and there was no apparent reason why it should not continue to do so. Such certainly was the opinion of the monarch himself and that of his ministers; and such also was the general opinion both in France and in Europe. The House of Orleans was bidding fair to become a French House of Hanover.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, beneath this apparent stability alarming symptoms might have been detected. There were little clouds creeping up on the horizon; some of them had been there throughout the whole period of the monarchy, others were new, all were gathering. The first and most dangerous of these was the vice of origin which haunted the monarchy. Like all compromises the Orleans regime lacked moral force; it could not appeal to monarchical sentiment, that sentiment being the exclusive stock-in-trade of the legitimate Bourbon line; but neither was it contractual, for it had been careful at the time of its initiation to avoid any contract with the nation; then again it had no democratic basis, and, although sops in various forms had been flung to the democracy, the "windows remained closed," and the monarchy continued to lean for support on the *bourgeoisie* and on the *bourgeoisie* alone. Meanwhile the itch for change, enhanced by the pusillanimous foreign policy of Louis Philippe, had grown to fever pitch; France was bored and disgusted with a regime so drab and uninspiring. To the weatherwise these various clouds might have heralded a storm of considerable violence.

Such strength as the monarchy possessed lay in the fact that no important political party desired its downfall. In point of numbers the Republican party was almost negligible, and the blow that did the fatal damage was in reality directed not at the Crown but at the ministers of the Crown. That the ministry carried the Crown with it in its downfall is proof indeed of the fatal weakness of the latter, but the re-

<sup>1</sup> De la Gorce, "Histoire de la Seconde République" (1887), I. 5.

sults of the crisis of 1848 were altogether in excess of the intentions of its promoters. The reasons for this overshooting of the mark are not far to seek: they were in the first place, the inherent fragility of the monarchy; secondly, the illegitimate union (so common in France and so fatal) of two political parties whose principles were divergent, with the sole object of promoting the downfall of the Government; thirdly, the daring of the small Republican minority, which enabled it to turn the unexpected situation to its own ends; fourthly, the helpless want of nerve displayed by the King and his entourage; this combined with Louis Philippe's hyper-subtlety to drive him into a hurried and needless abdication; fifthly, the capture by the Republican party of the great political hypnotist, Lamartine, whose impulsive and capricious pronouncement in favour of a Republic secured for France a form of government which she neither expected nor desired.

With these preliminary explanations it is possible to unravel the details of the crisis of 1848. The enemies of the ministry had long used the cry of "Reform" as their chief weapon; and we have seen how Odilon Barrot's scheme for reform was rejected in May, 1847, and how the Dynastic Left of which he was the leader, had allied itself with the Radical Left to promote the rejected policy; in the winter the curious idea was developed of holding banquets in Paris with the object of promoting the cause of reform, in other words of attacking the Guizot ministry. One of these banquets was fixed for 22 February, 1848; and the Government "proclaimed" it, as we should say in Ireland. Nothing happened upon that day that could be construed as a menace to the Government; an unarmed mob, mainly curious spectators, created a good deal of minor disturbance, but there was nothing seriously to alarm the Government. On the following day, however, it became clear that there was disaffection in the forces of order. The National Guard was permeated with the idea (which more than any other dominated the situation) that the King and his ministry would not be the worse of a lesson, and they adopted the impossible and fatal attitude of acting as mediators rather than repressers of disorder. Louis

Philippe had an altogether exaggerated belief in the National Guard, the bourgeois monarch looking on that bourgeois force as something peculiarly his own ; and the news of their modified defection had a quite unreasonably unnerving effect upon him. To use Émile Ollivier's witty simile, the National Guard's defection was to him as the approach of Birnam Wood was to Macbeth ; and he collapsed entirely, and—acting on Queen Amélie's suggestion—dismissed Guizot and summoned Molé (2.30 p.m., 23 February). A collision between the military and the crowd in the Boulevard des Capucines heightened the tension of the situation and ruined Molé's chances ; in the evening the King gave way another step and sent for Thiers (the leader of the left-centre), but at the same time strengthened the forces of order by appointing Bugeaud to the command of the troops in Paris. This was no doubt at the moment a mistake ; it should have been done before ; negotiation and repression are bad bedfellows. The only result was a great hardening of the insurrection during the night of the 23rd-24th. Even the courageous efforts of Odilon Barrot, who went through the streets trying to calm the crowds, were fruitless. Then there were a few whispers of abdication emanating from Garnier-Pagès and the small group of Republican deputies. In the morning of the 24th the military situation in Paris was very black and when the King attempted a review of the National Guards in the courtyard of the Tuileries he was badly received and abandoned the attempt. Almost immediately afterwards, in a fit of chagrin and despair, he prematurely abdicated in favour of his grandson, left the palace with the Queen, and hurried to St. Cloud, whence he proceeded to le Havre, and after exciting adventures escaped in disguise to England (3 March).<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Letters of Queen Victoria," *op. cit.* II. 175 and 188.

## AUTHORITIES.

The authorities for this period are scanty. There are, however, several histories of the July Monarchy, of which those of Du Bled (1887), Malet (1898), and Weill (1902) are the most recent. Louis Blanc's "Histoire de dix ans" (1844-45) is violently polemical.

*Guizot, F. P. G.* "Mémoires." *Ut supra*.

The "Souvenirs" of the Baron de Barante (1890-1901), the "Mémoires" of Odilon Barrot (1875-76), the Letters of Lacordaire (1870), and of Lamennais (1858), and the works of Sainte-Beuve and Béranger are among the most interesting of the contemporary authorities. See also "Paris révolutionnaire" (1833-34), and Thiers' "Discours parlementaires" (1879-89).



## CHAPTER XXXVII

### THE SECOND REPUBLIC

THE Revolution had gone much farther than its promoters had intended. The *bourgeoisie* was stupefied at what had happened, even the Republicans who had first suggested abdication were slightly breathless at the result. But there was a knot of adventurers sufficiently bold to proceed to the Chamber of Deputies and to oppose the appeal of the widowed Duchess of Orleans, who claimed a regency for her son, the solution which would, it is safe to say, have commended itself to the majority of Frenchmen. In this opposition they received the unexpected and, as it proved, decisive support of Lamartine. Lamartine was a man of letters who had been drawn into the vortex of politics but had remained detached from all parties and with an ascendancy over all. He had taken no part in the earlier stages of the crisis, but now, when all parties were paralysed, he stepped to the front, and, with the overpowering eloquence of which he was master, advocated the rejection of the claims of the Duchess of Orleans and the formation of a Provisional Government, i.e. of a Republic, until the electors could be consulted. While he was still speaking the Assembly was broken up by the invasion of an armed mob, with the result that the Provisional Government was nominated by a mere rump at the dictation of the invaders. The first names were those of Lamartine, Ledru-Rollin and Marie; to this list were added (after Lamartine's departure to the Hôtel de Ville—and even more irregularly) the names of Garnier-Pagès and Crémieux.

The Provisional Government proved itself a true child of its mother—the Revolution of February, 1848; as aimless as

that parent and as apt to be driven this way and that by the gusts of popular opinion. It was quickly driven into three fearful blunders: the acknowledgment of the principle of right to work, the consequent establishment (26 February) of permanent national workshops, and the creation (28 February) of a permanent labour commission under the presidency of Louis Blanc. The wind was obviously blowing from the extremist rather than from the reactionary quarter; and the task of the Provisional Government quickly resolved itself into a contest with Radical Socialism. The "Straw-Hat" manifestation (a demonstration, insignificant in itself, which took place on 16 March as a protest against Ledru-Rollin's dismissal of the superior companies of the National Guard—the *Voltigeurs* and *Grenadiers*) was used by the Socialists as a pretext to raise the cry of reaction and demand the withdrawal of the troops and the postponement of the elections.

All the latter part of March the Government was in grave difficulties. It had succeeded a regime which, whatever its faults, had at any rate been an economic success and had greatly developed the prosperity of the kingdom. All this was upset by the February Revolution, and prosperity was quickly converted into economic chaos. The Government turned this way and that in search of remedies and palliatives; but its chief financial resource, a direct tax on real property, known as the tax of 45 *centimes*, only served to increase its unpopularity. Equally unpopular was its extremely correct foreign policy. Disgusted with the pusillanimity of Louis Philippe's diplomacy, many, perhaps a majority of, Frenchmen hoped, if not for a return to the glorious days of revolutionary propaganda, at any rate for a firmer tone in the conduct of foreign affairs. The general epidemic of unrest spread abroad by the February Revolution and which convulsed Poland, Germany, Italy, and Austria simultaneously, seemed a glorious opening for such a school of foreign policy. It was loudly acclaimed by the small but vociferous party which took to itself the name of the *Risquons tout*, but it received little encouragement from the ministers, whose circular to the Powers on 7 March, though

it denounced the settlement of 1815 and upbraided governments that throttled liberty, gave no prospect of active interference. The period from 15 March until the date which had been fixed for the appeal to the country was one of continued agitation and administrative anarchy; conditions which were favourable to the Extremists. Louis Blanc, Albert, Blanqui, and the Socialists conspired to prepare a *journée* with the object of staving off the appeal to the people; for, like most agitators, they relied not on the democracy but on a ring of malcontents. The situation was complicated by the indecision of Ledru-Rollin; it was not until the morning of 16 April that he came down on the Government side of the fence. This, and the lucky chance that brought General Changarnier to Paris, led to the complete failure of the insurrection which had been prepared by the Extremists, and which broke out on 18 April. Changarnier was put in command of the troops and by his clever use of them, completely ruined the insurrection. Thanks to him the Government's success was so great as to be actually embarrassing; for it encouraged the forces of reaction; and it was actually necessary to make concessions to the defeated party in order to demonstrate that the triumph had not been a triumph for reaction; the food-taxes were modified; a progressive inhabited-house-duty was imposed, together with taxes on dogs, carriages, and men-servants, and a one per cent duty on hypothekes.

Meanwhile about thirty of the Radical party under the inspiration of Louis Blanc had met at the office of the "*Réforme*" newspaper and had nominated a Provisional Government of their own, and the ultimate Provisional Government of eleven, was formed by a fusion of these two irregularly nominated bodies;<sup>1</sup> the names added by the Radicals were those of Louis Blanc (whom Lamartine had carefully excluded from his list), Marrast and Flocon (two Radical journalists), and Albert, a workman ("the flag carried in front of Louis Blanc"). Of the eleven, six were members of the old bourgeois party who, though accepting the Republic, were not irrevocably committed

<sup>1</sup> The Radical intruders were at first admitted as secretaries to the Provisional Government; but after a few days this distinction was dropped.

to Republicanism, and would under certain conditions have rallied to a regency. These were Dupont de l'Eure (President of Council), Arago (Navy), Marie (Public Works), Crémieux (Justice), Garnier-Pagès<sup>1</sup> (Mayor of Paris), and Marrast. Two, Ledru-Rollin and Flocon, were thorough-going Jacobin-Republicans, while two, Louis Blanc and Albert, were Socialist-Republicans. The rallying point of all, the personification of the new regime, without whom it could not have come into existence, without whom it could not remain in existence, was Lamartine, the least political being that had ever dominated the political world; poet and sentimentalist, he was guided by impulse rather than reason, plunged inconsequently in the most unexpected directions, dragging after him the motley mass of politicians whom he fascinated by his eloquence. It is this dominance of Lamartine that makes the whole period of the Second Republic such a strange episode in government; almost laughable in its blunders, capricious contradictions, and inconsequences.

The result of the bourgeois victory of 16 April was, as we have seen, the acceptance of the strictly anti-bourgeois principle of progressive taxation. The Government proceeded also with its preparations for the elections; the franchise was extended to all Frenchmen over twenty-one years of age, while all over twenty-five were eligible for election, the ballot was to be secret, the deputies were to number 900 and were to receive 25 francs a day; no deputy could be declared elected who did not receive 2000 votes.

During the few weeks that intervened between the unsuccessful insurrection and the day of the elections (23 April, Easter Day), both sides worked their hardest, but on the whole public opinion was rapidly concentrating itself against the extremists—even against the Provisional Government so far as it had played into the hands of the extremists. The result of the elections was twofold; in the first

<sup>1</sup> There were two Garnier-Pagès (uterine brothers), the elder died in 1841. This was the younger and more celebrated. He was almost immediately (5 March) transferred to the Ministry of Finance, and succeeded as Mayor by Marrast.

place it confirmed the Republic, in the second place it condemned violence. Lamartine, at once the founder and the restrainer of the new regime, was returned for constituency after constituency, while Ledru-Rollin and all the advocates of violence, as well as all the labour candidates, suffered eclipse. Incidentally the Legitimists, who won 130 seats, the Third and Left-Centre parties, and the Dynastic Left, captured about a quarter of the Assembly; and amongst them returned to public life nearly all the prominent men of the old Assembly.<sup>1</sup> In spite of this, however, and also in spite of Radical outbreaks at Limoges and Lyons, which were only suppressed after some blood had been shed, the elections were a complete triumph for moderate Republicanism.

On 4 May this immense and motley Assembly<sup>2</sup> met in the Palais Bourbon, and Lamartine, in one of his most celebrated outbursts of eloquence, delivered the *apologia* of the Provisional Government. That body was, in fact, extremely self-complacent and apparently blind to the danger of its stopgap legislation; the Assembly flattered its vanity by a practically unanimous vote that it had "deserved well of the Country," and proceeded to take steps to provide an administration for the time that must necessarily intervene before a Constitution could be prepared and adopted. Instead of appointing a ministry responsible to the Assembly and removable thereby, which was the proposal advocated by the Right, an "Executive Committee" was appointed, on the direct initiative of Lamartine himself, which was to have the responsibility for administration until a Constitution was adopted and to whom the ministry were to be responsible. The members were Arago, Garnier-Pagès, Marie, Lamartine, and Ledru-Rollin; and they were elected in that order. This moment marks the commencement of Lamartine's decline; he had lost considerable influence by his quixotic insistence on the inclusion of Ledru-Rollin whose behaviour had nearly wrecked the Provisional Government and who had conspicuously been coquetting with the

<sup>1</sup> Including Thiers and Molé, who both soon obtained seats at supplementary elections.

<sup>2</sup> See de la Gorce, *op. cit.* i. 224 *sqq.* for a description of the Assembly.

extremists.<sup>1</sup> In the ministry were many of the members of the retiring Government, such as Crémieux, and Flocon, while Marrast was appointed Mayor of Paris and Caussidière Prefect of Police.

The Socialist party, despairing of getting its way in the Assembly by legitimate means, set to work to apply external pressure, and organized a demonstration for 15 May. The conduct of General Courtais who was in command of the troops was a complete contrast to that of General Changarnier on 16 April. He tamely allowed an armed crowd, headed by Blanqui, Sobrier, and Raspail, to invade the Assembly; the sitting was broken up and only the arrival of the *garde mobile* prevented the formation of a new Provisional Government. This insurrection shook the confidence of the Assembly in its Executive Committee and greatly weakened the cause of order. During the forty days that followed the Committee was engaged with the Herculean task of controlling the *ateliers nationaux* which had been bequeathed to them by the Provisional Government. The result of the establishment of a right to work and of means of providing that work had been exactly what might have been expected. An immense number of workmen, and an even more immense number of loafers, drifted to Paris and no economic work could be extemporized for them; from 14,000, on 15 March, the number of inscribed workers had risen to approximately 100,000 in May; sufficient work was not forthcoming, and men were paid a franc a day for doing nothing (*Solde d'inactivité*). The question was referred to the *Comité de Travail* who proposed piece-work; but this solution was abandoned.

The Executive Committee was by this time in an unhappy plight; out of favour with the Assembly (on account of its failure on 15 May), disliked by the *bourgeoisie*, and becoming more and more unpopular with the working classes. The

<sup>1</sup> The votes were: Arago . . . 725  
 Garnier-Pagès 715  
 Marie . . . 702  
 Lamartine . 643  
 Ledru-Rollin 458

*ateliers nationaux*, their inherited burden, could not be thrown off. The only outlet was in some extra-legal convulsion. Such a convulsion had for some time been expected and occurred on 23 June. Conscious of the approach of an insurrection, the Government attempted to meet it by the dismissal of Émile Thomas, the head of the *ateliers nationaux*, who had recently adopted and attempted to put into practice the socialistic ideas of Louis Blanc, and by the dismissal of some of the workmen, with the idea of a gradual closing down of the *ateliers*.

The Assembly was by this time dictating to its own Executive Committee and forced it (on 21 June) to decree the closing of the *ateliers*. This was courting disaster; for it was impossible to end thus summarily an institution, however bad, which had come to play a large part in the economic life of the capital. On 23 June, barricades were thrown up in the working-class quarters, and on the other hand the Assembly placed the military command in the capable hands of Cavaignac, the War Minister, a determined soldier, a Republican, and a champion of order. These precautions were justified, for the insurrection of June, 1848, was no engineered outbreak, but a dangerous and spontaneous explosion of popular fury due to disappointed hopes and to anger at the bungling of the Government. It began at 6 a.m. on 23 June, and continued until 26 June. Both sides were fully prepared, and the best proof of the serious nature of the outbreak is that it took Cavaignac, aided as he was by Generals Lamoricière, Bédéau, Damesme, and Duvivier, three whole days to wear it down; and that in the end he only did so after severe fighting and much bloodshed. The barricades which the insurrectionaries threw up round the disaffected quarters were serious obstacles, and were only captured by a series of real battles, in one of which (on the 25th) General Bréa lost his life. The deputies, including Lamartine and Bixio, who courageously tried to mediate, were fired on, and Mgr. Affré, Archbishop of Paris, while on a similar mission, was mortally wounded. By the evening of the 25th, however, only the Faubourg St. Antoine held out. Cavaignac, whose behaviour throughout the crisis

was staunch in the extreme, refused to grant terms and demanded unconditional surrender. On 26 June he completed his victory. The forces of order had won, but at terrible cost of life. At least 10,000 persons were said to have been killed and wounded in this sanguinary struggle.

Paris was horrified at the magnitude of the outbreak and at the bloodshed. The bourgeois classes were terrified at the explosion of uncontrollable forces, and determined so to order affairs that such scenes could not recur. The insurrection of June was therefore followed by an energetic reaction. Cavaignac, whose inflexible behaviour had alone saved the country from calamities even more terrible, was entrusted with the formation of a government, and constructed a ministry which included Lamoricière (at the War Office), Goudchaux as Finance Minister, and Sénard (who had been closely associated with Cavaignac during the insurrection) as Minister of Interior. Goudchaux was committed to the closing of the *ateliers nationaux*, and this vital step was at once taken. At the same time measures of relief were introduced, and praiseworthy attempts to encourage industry and restore economic conditions were initiated. Restrictions on Clubs and on the Press (Act of 11 August, 1848) were revived—a rather humiliating return to the old monarchical policy of repression—while Paris remained under martial law. At the same time a commission of inquiry was appointed to investigate the causes of the insurrection. The persons to whom the responsibility mainly attached were Louis Blanc and Caussidière; threatened with prosecution they took to flight. Ledru-Rollin—a member of the former Government—also came under suspicion.

Cavaignac was in a peculiar position. He was a man qualified to save the state not to govern it, and his stiffness and excess of severity gradually alienated the Conservative party who wanted moderate measures—palliation rather than repression, and were moreover disgusted by his uncompromising Republicanism. While Cavaignac was thus dissipating his popularity the Assembly was beginning to devote itself to the task for which it had been elected—the construction of



a Constitution. Its Constitutional Committee produced its final report on 30 August. The discussion in the Assembly began on 5 September and lasted till 23 October, during the whole of which period the "state of siege" (martial law) was in force.

The three outstanding questions were the right to work, the unity or division of the Legislative Body, and the mode of electing a President of the Republic. The first of these questions occupied the Assembly from 11 to 15 September. The Socialists, backed by Ledru-Rollin and Lamartine, stood out for the principle of the right to work, and it was reserved for the eloquent common-sense of Thiers to explode a theory which had already proved itself a menace to the State. "You promise to every man an unlimited amount of the precise kind of work for which he is adapted; you are promising something that is impossible or, if not impossible, ruinous. *If you ruin the Treasury, it will be the working classes that will suffer.* We appeal to something higher than humanity—to justice." The clause was cut out of the Constitution; and at the same time the more questionable step was taken of rejecting the *impôt progressif*. On the question of single or double chamber government, the commission had reported in favour of the former. Odilon Barrot advocated two chambers, but his proposal was defeated by 530 votes to 289. The Constitution in its final form, therefore, provided for a single chamber of 750 members elected by universal suffrage, with secret ballot. This Assembly was to be permanent but could adjourn itself; the deputies were to sit for three years and to be re-eligible; they were to receive payment and to be inviolable. No measure was to pass into law without three debates at intervals of ten days.

The final question was that of the President of the Republic. The Committee's report provided for his election by universal suffrage for a four years' term of office; if no candidate received more than half the recorded votes, the Assembly could choose the President from the five candidates ~~who~~ received most votes. No President was to be re-eligible for a second consecutive term: he was not to command an

army, dissolve the Assembly, or interfere with the Legislature ; nor was he to be inviolable. This question of the powers of the President was a grave one, and occupied the Assembly for many weeks. It was all the more grave because the decline in Cavaignac's popularity was clearing the way for a candidate whose very name was a menace to a Republic ; this was Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the third and eldest surviving son of Louis Bonaparte, King of Holland,<sup>1</sup> and heir to the Napoleonic claim on the throne. Louis Napoleon was now forty years of age ; his early life had been spent in exile and partly in prison ; he had made two fatuous attempts to recover the throne, the first in October, 1836, when he appeared at Strassburg, and the second in August, 1840, when he landed at Boulogne. After the first of these fiascos he had been dispatched to America, after the second he was confined in the fortress of Ham. After the February Revolution Louis Napoleon had come from London to Paris, but only to return at once to England. On 4 June, however, his name had been put forward as a candidate for the Assembly at the supplementary elections, and he had been elected in four departments. The Executive promptly gave orders for his arrest if he landed in France, and he sent in a dignified resignation, declining to be the " cause of disorder ". On 17 September, however, he once more became a candidate at supplementary elections, and was returned by Paris and four other constituencies. On 24 September he arrived in Paris and quietly took his seat on the left of the Assembly. The direct representative of the great Napoleon was bound to be a strong candidate for the chief position in the State. The discussion of the Presidential clauses of the constitution were gravely complicated by the presence of his small inarticulate figure on the benches of the left. A large section of the Assembly gradually came to realize that if the election was left to the vote of the people, Louis Napoleon could hardly fail to secure the Presidency, and a proposal was brought forward that the Assembly—not the electors—should appoint the first President.

It was at this juncture that Lamartine, with an outburst

<sup>1</sup> And of his wife Hortense Beauharnais.

of his old inconsequence, intervened in the debate, and, to the astonishment of all, sponsored the cause of election by universal suffrage. "We must plunge into the abyss," he said, "and re-conquer enthusiasm by a display of confidence. Brumaires are only possible with Terror behind and Marengos in front." "*Alea jacta est*," he concluded, "*que dieu et le peuple prononcent: il faut laisser quelque chose à la providence*"; with these words he compassed the destruction of the regime which his own eloquence had established; 627 votes were cast for, 130 against, the appointment of a President by universal suffrage. Having committed itself to this rash policy, the Assembly piled up further restrictions on the dangerous official which it was creating; the President's relations were not to be eligible either to succeed him or for the vice-presidency; he was to take an oath of loyalty to the Republic. It was high treason if he dissolved or interfered with the Assembly. All this was of little consequence; the great point had been decided, and the date of the election was fixed for 10 December.

Many names—including those of Thiers, Molé, Lamartine, Bugeaud, and Changarnier were suggested, but the choice ultimately lay between Louis Napoleon and Cavaignac. Cavaignac's popularity had been greatly weakened by his period of office; he had alienated Radicals by his severity, Conservatives by his unyielding Republicanism. He was, indeed, still the favourite in the Assembly, and obtained from them a vote of approbation of his conduct in June; but the election was not in the hands of the Assembly. Louis Napoleon, on the other hand, profited by being untried; nothing could be urged against him. The witchery of the great name he bore did the rest, and he had the intuition to keep silence and let it work; vaguely, and without committing himself, he indicated his approval of various policies suggested to him; his very mediocrity came to his assistance and prevented his spoiling his chances by too much initiative. His only definite action was to associate himself with the leaders of the extreme Left. Thus while he was known to stand for order, his overtures to Louis Blanc indicated that he

also stood for reform ; his name was enough to guarantee that he stood for glory. Cavaignac's chances were reduced considerably during the election period by the failure of the French Government to come forward as the protector of the Pope on the assassination of the Papal Minister, Rossi,<sup>1</sup> 15 November, in spite of their attempts to do so ; the Pope withdrew to Naples, not to France, a considerable blow to French prestige. At the same time the abuse of what was called the *récompenses nationales* (viz. rewards and indemnities for the sufferers in the February insurrection) brought the Government, and with the Government Cavaignac, into bad odour with the electorate. The result of the polling was decisive : Louis Napoleon received 5,434,226 votes ; Cavaignac, 1,448,107 votes ; Ledru-Rollin, 370,119 votes ; Lamartine, 17,910 votes. Cavaignac was crushingly defeated, Lamartine altogether extinguished, and Louis Napoleon victorious beyond the wildest expectations.

The man who thus ascended to the highest position in the State, and whose personality was to dominate France and to some extent Europe, for twenty years, is one of the most perplexing characters in history. His chief characteristic was his unshakable belief in his destiny ; this had borne him through the long period of exile and captivity. He was swayed more by his heart, which was large, than by his head, which was mediocre. He was endowed with very strong sympathies and sensibility, but with none of the imperturbable fortitude of his famous uncle. His sympathies were very strongly liberal, and we may credit him with the desire to promote the cause of liberty and reform as well from predilection as from policy. During his chequered youth he had even been a member of the Carbonari, and he never shook off his liberal traditions. He was more than a liberal, he was by nature and perhaps by training something of a conspirator. He loved to envelop himself in an atmosphere of mystery and preferred always the circuitous to the straight. The alarming thing was that this love of mystery concealed a really confused mind. Louis Napoleon was not a man of

<sup>1</sup> *Infra*, p. 312.

intellect, not even a man of common sense ; and he concealed his stupidity and his lack of common sense by the sphinx-like pose which was dear and natural to him. But he was a sphinx, it has been truly said, without an enigma. Not that he was without political instincts ; he seldom misread public opinion ; but in the higher regions of statesmanship he lacked both clarity and vision.

The new President found himself in a very equivocal position. He had come into power not as the leader, or by the assistance, of any political party, but on a wave of popular feeling ; and this difficulty became sensible at once when he turned his attention to the formation of a ministry. His own instincts prompted him to look to the Republican groups ; and he even sent for Lamartine, declaring generously to the man he had just defeated that "he had popularity enough for two".<sup>1</sup> But, though this idea of embracing the defeated candidates, Cavaignac and Lamartine, in the ministry was magnificent, it was not politics. Still less could Louis Napoleon look to any of the Conservative groups whose policy involved reaction ; for reaction was far more distasteful and less possible to him than Republicanism or Liberalism. On Lamartine's advice he therefore fell back on the Dynastic Left and sent for Odilon Barrot (the man who, like a barrel, was "as sonorous as he was empty") and constructed a ministry almost wholly Orleanist and quite non-Republican in character. One out-and-out Republican only was included—Bixio, but he soon resigned ; de Falloux (nicknamed "fallax" by his enemies), who took the education portfolio and was one of the most distinguished of the ministers, was a Legitimist ; Odilon Barrot became President of the Council, *Garde des Sceaux*, and Minister of Justice. Léon de Maleville, a follower of Thiers, went to the Interior ; Drouyn de Lhuys, an old servant of Louis Philippe, took the Foreign Office ; Léon Faucher the Department of Public Works ; the remainder were nonentities. Changarnier, who was appointed to the command of the National Guard and the first military

<sup>1</sup> Ollivier, *op. cit.* II, 118.

division, was an Orleanist. Bugeaud, who went to the Army of the Alps, a Legitimist. It was inevitable that this ministry, Orleanist at heart and serving a Chief of the State who did not command the confidence of the Assembly, should quickly come to blows with that body. The breaches in the Republican party rapidly healed in face of the dangers with which Republicanism was confronted, Louis Blanc and the Socialists reconciling themselves with Ledru-Rollin and the Jacobin Republicans. The ministry was confronted with a revival of anarchy and at once took strong measures ; it reduced the anarchical *garde mobile*, and by an imposing military demonstration damped the ardour of the Republicans. On 29 January, 1849, the Assembly was constrained to vote its own dissolution, agreeing that this event should take place on 4 March. Thus easily did the new President, who based his power on popular support, get rid of an assembly which was unfavourable to him.

Foreign affairs meanwhile were causing grave concern to the new Government. Louis Napoleon's accession to power coincided with a serious European crisis which had in part been provoked by the French upheavals of 1848. In many parts of Europe the Revolution of 1848 had been the signal for popular risings, of which by far the most important had been those in Italy ; and as Italy was destined to be the tempter of France throughout the period of Louis Napoleon's Government, it is necessary to understand the complicated situation that prevailed in the Peninsula.

The settlement of 1815 had secured Austria in the possession of Lombardy and Venice and in a somewhat vague protectorate of the lesser central Italian States (Modena, etc.). From that time until 1840 there had been a series of insurrections against Austria in Italy, all of which had ended in failure. Nevertheless in the midst of these rebuffs the party of Italian liberation was forming ; its chief foothold was in Piedmont (the home of Balbo, Gioberti, and d'Azeglio), and Charles Albert, King of Piedmont (or Sardinia), became its figure-head. When in 1846 Cardinal Mastai-Ferretti ascended the papal throne as Pius IX he adopted a reforming attitude, and

made advances to France in search of support for his policy. The leisurely and benevolent concessions of the Pope were not, however, to the taste of the more ardent Italian reformers, who, under the influence of Mazzini, desired to seize liberty by violent means; and when on 15 November, 1847, the Pope opened the new Council of State in Rome, there was a great outburst of popular feeling and Pius IX, who intended the Council to be purely advisory, found that, against his will, he was being put forward as the champion of Italian independence. At the same moment revolution broke out in Sicily, and constitutions were proclaimed at Naples, Florence, and Turin. Everyone (and no one more than the Pope himself) expected that the flood of insurrection would penetrate to Rome, and Louis Philippe's Government, which had always adopted a sympathetic attitude towards the Papacy, prepared to render armed assistance. While these preparations were being made the unexpected collapse of February overtook the Orleans monarchy, and almost at the same moment an insurrection in Vienna brought about the fall of Metternich. There followed risings in Milan and Venice against Austria, and Radetzky, the Austrian Commander-in-Chief in Italy, shut himself up in "the Quadrilateral". Charles Albert of Piedmont, thinking that the opportunity had come to strike for Italian independence, crossed the Ticino. The French Government offered assistance, for Austria was the traditional enemy; Charles Albert declined such help in the memorable words: *Italia fara da se*. Lamartine continued to offer assistance in a quarter where it was not wanted. During May, 1848, nothing seemed more probable than the complete expulsion of Austria from Italy, and Vienna approached London with pleas for mediation. Palmerston and Russell, who warmly approved of the national movement in Italy, suggested a mediation on the basis of a surrender by Austria of Lombardy and part of Venice. Then quite suddenly the fortune of war changed; Radetzky completely turned the tables on Charles Albert, invaded Lombardy, and on 23 March, 1849, defeated the Piedmontese in the Battle of Novara, and in the armistice of Salasco forced the King to agree to the *status quo ante bellum*.

After this collapse the centre of interest was once more transferred to Rome. The Pope had declined to participate in the attempt to eject Austria from Italy, and had thus definitely detached himself from the national movement. The situation in Rome became more and more threatening, and Pius IX appealed to France for protection. Cavaignac, who was then in power, declined to move. On 15 November, Rossi, the new papal minister, who was identified with the cause of reaction, was assassinated, and six days later the Pope fled to Gaëta. It was just at this moment that Louis Napoleon came into power.

The new French Government, which was both anti-Republican and to some extent Catholic (under the influence of de Falloux who was a strong Catholic), was much more inclined than its predecessor had been to move to the protection of the Pope; and when on 9 February, 1849, a Republic was set up in Rome, and Pius IX appealed to the Powers, and when it was found that Austria was ready to intervene, the French Cabinet, as much perhaps from jealousy of Austria as from affection for the Papacy, asked for a vote of 1,200,000 francs for "a Mediterranean expedition". Ledru-Rollin and Arago opposed the vote on the ground that it was contrary to French Republican tradition, but it was carried by a large majority (388-161). Thus France took the plunge into the double Italian policy in which she was to flounder for many years. Anxious to assist in driving Austria from Italy, she was at the same time ready to defend the Papacy against Revolutionaries. But to the Italian national party the expulsion of Austria was but a step in the policy of a united Italy, in which the downfall of the Papacy (as a temporal power) was another step. In this inextricable tangle France was now involved.

Oudinot was put in command of an expedition to Rome which landed at Civita Vecchia on 25 April, and reached the walls of Rome on the 30th.<sup>1</sup> The Republican Government, inspired by Mazzini and heartened by the presence of

<sup>1</sup>Oudinot's expedition force comprised some 8000 to 10,000 men, but it was very badly equipped and had no siege train. Oudinot was the son of Napoleon I's Marshal.



Garibaldi, had rejected the French advances ; and when Oudinot's troops reached the walls of the Janiculum, they encountered determined resistance where they had looked for nothing of the kind. Misled by their maps, they first attacked a gate which had long been walled up, then another gate (Porta Cavellegieri) in an angle of the wall where they were exposed to a deadly cross-fire ; a determined sortie led by Garibaldi ended in the total repulse of the attackers, whose losses were 500 killed and wounded and 365 prisoners. Oudinot fell back and decided to wait for reinforcements (30 April).

The news of this provoked the Republican party in France to great indignation. Jules Favre delivered a scathing protest in the Assembly, and Drouyn de Lhuys hurriedly dispatched Ferdinand de Lesseps to Rome to arrange terms of peace at any price (9 May). The elections, however, were now approaching, and the French President thought fit to display fresh ardour in the papal cause in order to propitiate the Catholic electors in France. By appeals to the religious and military spirit of the country a great triumph was recorded for the Conservative party at the polls. In the new Chamber about 500 of the 700 members belonged to one wing or another of that party ; the leaders of the February insurrection suffered complete shipwreck, only three of them surviving ; and Lamartine was one of those to disappear. On the other hand not many Bonapartists were returned, the prevailing colour of the Assembly being Orleanist ; and Socialism met with considerable success. The ministry was reconstructed, de Tocqueville taking the Foreign Office and Dufaure the Interior ; many of the old ministers, including de Falloux, retained their portfolios, while Drouyn de Lhuys went as ambassador to London. On 27 May the Assembly dissolved itself with somewhat undignified haste, and the field was clear for the new regime.

The first step of the new Government was to repudiate the agreement which de Lesseps, after infinite labour, had signed with the Roman Republic. Oudinot, who had already been strongly reinforced and had himself (1 June) repudi-

ated de Lesseps' treaty, was at once instructed to resume the offensive ; and on 3 June the attack on the Janiculum was renewed. This time it was more 'successful. But it was not till twenty days later that Oudinot was master of the city, and only after the expedition had cost the French some 1000 men. Ten days later the restoration of the Pope was declared. But Pius IX had by this time lost all taste for reform, and instead of returning to Rome sent a commission of Cardinals (the "Red Triumvirate"), who initiated a policy of reprisals and reaction. Louis Napoleon, who could never forget his old connexion with the Carbonari and the liberal movement in Italy, was greatly enraged at this ; and on 18 August took the highly unconstitutional step of publishing a private letter which he had written to Major Edgar Ney. This letter disclosed the liberal policy which the President desired to impose on the Papal States:—the *Code Napoléon*, secular administration, amnesty, and a reforming Government. Over against this programme that of Pius IX was disclosed (12 September) ; it included provincial and municipal liberties, a modified amnesty, a consultative financial council, but no real constitutional reforms. The President was as angry with the papal *Motu Proprio* as the Pope was with the Edgar Ney letter. Pius IX refused to return to Rome ; and the idea which Louis Napoleon had been cherishing, and to which he subsequently recurred, of a federal Italy under the leadership of a liberal Pope, was nipped in the bud. Italy relapsed into its old conditions ; but the aspirations for national unity continued to subsist, to be used not by the Pope but by the house of Savoy.

Meanwhile the republican party in France had attempted to make the Roman expedition, which was essentially anti-republican, a lever for insurrection, and on 13 June there was an attempt at an insurrection in Paris which was thwarted by the energy of General Changarnier and the indifference of the Parisian public. Ledru-Rollin, the instigator of this insurrection, was obliged to fly from Paris. More serious riots in the provinces (especially at Lyons) were also put down. On 13 August the Assembly was prorogued,

The President was, by this time, highly discontented with his ministry which, strongly Catholic in tone and influenced by de Falloux, had declared its satisfaction with the papal *Motu Proprio*; in other words had set itself against the declared Italian policy of Louis Napoleon. On 31 October, therefore, the President took the decisive step of dismissing the ministers and appointing a ministry of persons who would support, not the policy of the Assembly, but that of the *Élysée*. This was the first step towards personal power. The head of the new ministry was General d'Hautpoul, Minister for War, but its most active member was Rouher (*Garde des Sceaux*); Fould became Finance Minister. The retiring ministry had left one piece of excellent work uncompleted which was quickly brought to a satisfactory conclusion by its successor; this was the establishment of free education on non-monopolistic lines. This Act, which is known as Falloux' Act, was not passed until 15 March, 1850; it was really a compromise, but one which gave great privileges to the Church.

Parties in the Assembly were now once more becoming strongly defined, the Catholic-Conservatives and Socialist-Republicans becoming respectively more or less homogeneous again. The trial and punishment of the prisoners of 13 June led to Socialist successes in by-elections, and the ministry, alarmed at this, set to work to undermine the left by an attack on the principle of universal suffrage—"rectifying" it, as it was called. It was proposed to exclude criminals and vagabonds and to insist on three years' residence within one commune as a qualification. After heated debates, in which Lamartine made one of his last public appearances, the law was passed on 31 May, 1850,<sup>1</sup> and about three million persons were disfranchised. This tampering with the Constitution was followed by a law against clubs and public meetings (9 June, 1850). By this time the President was in full rivalry with the Assembly, as well as at open war with the Republican party; his activity in popularizing himself was wonderful, and it was clear to the least observant that he would not be permanently content with the position of

<sup>1</sup> It is printed in Hélié, op. cit. p. 1149.

"chief-railway-opener". The greatest obstacle to his ambitions was General Changarnier, and the struggle almost resolved itself into a duel between the two men. Napoleon first disgraced Neumayer, Changarnier's right-hand man, and, emboldened by this success, proceeded to divide the General's command and, when the Cabinet resigned, quickly formed another which included Rouher, Fould, and Baroche.

Everyone was now certain that the Republic was doomed and that an Empire under Louis Napoleon was in contemplation; already Thiers had pronounced his epigram: *l'Empire est fait*; the only question was whether it would involve an armed *coup d'état*. By the Constitution both President and Assembly were due to be renewed in April and May, 1852, and by Article 45 the President was debarred from re-election. This dilemma could only be got over by a *coup d'état* or by a revision of the Constitution. In the hope of a peaceful solution, proposals were introduced for such a revision, but these were rejected (July-August) and the Assembly was prorogued till 4 November, 1851.

Louis Napoleon now made his preparations for securing by violence what he could not secure by constitutional means; he sent to Algeria for General Saint-Arnaud, to whom he allotted the military leadership of the *coup d'état*; he rallied round him the personal party which he had been collecting, the most conspicuous members of which were Morny and Maupas. He posed to the bourgeois as the great prop of order in the coming crisis of 1852, which they greatly feared, and by proposing the repeal of the law of 31 May he dangled before the democracy the bait of restored universal suffrage. This proposal caused the resignation of the ministry, and a Government was formed with Saint-Arnaud as Minister for War, and Maupas as Prefect of Police. On 4 November, the motion to repeal the law of 31 May was defeated by a narrow majority, mainly Royalists; a proposal that the President of the Assembly should have the power to call on the armed force was also defeated (this time by the Republicans), and by the close of November everyone realized that the *coup d'état* was imminent.

On the morning of 2 December, Paris awoke to find the streets placarded with a proclamation announcing the dissolution of the Assembly and the restoration of universal suffrage, and fixing 14 December for an appeal to the people on the subject of the Constitution. The announcement was on the whole received with signs of approval, as announcements backed by a great display of force are apt to be. The Palais Bourbon, where the Assembly sat, was occupied by military, and, when the Assembly tried to meet elsewhere, it was promptly dispersed. Next day there was a feeble attempt at insurrection. General Magnan, in command of the troops, remembering Cavaignac's principles, allowed the movement to mature, and on the 4th struck with great deliberation and even a certain amount of brutality. His measures were marked by the utmost severity and were as successful as they were severe. On the 5th the insurrection flickered out. The bloodshed had not been great; the soldiers lost 25 killed and 184 wounded: the populace lost a good many more, but probably not more than 200 killed, amongst whom were a good many innocent spectators.

The resistance was much more serious in the provinces, where the Socialist demagogues had an elaborate organization, especially in Central France and the Rhône valley. For a time there was something resembling civil war; but the provincial opposition only served to rally Paris to the new regime; for the one thing that was feared was general disorder. On the whole, the *coup d'état* may be said to have been very cleverly managed and to have passed off with a minimum of bloodshed. Less creditable, but perhaps as necessary, was the severe repression that followed the restoration of tranquillity. Inquisitions, known as "mixed tribunals" (*viz.* the general, the *procureur*, and the *préfet* sitting together) dispensed arbitrary, but on the whole not excessive, punishment among those suspected of treason to the new regime; 2804 persons were imprisoned, 1545 exiled, 9769 transported (9530 to Algeria, 239 to Cayenne), a good many were subsequently pardoned, but in 1853 there were still 6000 proscribed persons and in Cayenne 150 political convicts. While these

harsh measures were being dealt out, the question whether Louis Napoleon should be entrusted with the task of forming a Constitution was submitted to a plebiscite; and on 30 December it was decided by 7,400,000 to 640,700 that he should.

Aided by his new ministry, which included Morny (Interior), Saint-Arnaud (War), Rouher (Justice) and Fould (Finance), Louis Napoleon, on 14 January, instituted his own "Consulate," for the Constitution of 1852 was, to a great extent, a copy of that of Brumaire,<sup>1</sup> and showed Louis Napoleon's fidelity to the example of his uncle.

Meanwhile the nephew was enjoying, like the uncle, a period of dictatorship and, like him, displaying a feverish, if less well-directed, activity. The period between the promulgation of the Constitution (14 January) and the meeting of the *Corps Législatif* (29 March) was so crammed with legislation that, when that body met, it found little left for it to do. The repression of opponents continued; and a mean and very unpopular attack was made on the private fortune of the

<sup>1</sup> He became President for ten years, with command of the troops (this was more than Napoleon I got at Brumaire): he enjoyed powers of peace and war, patronage, and all executive functions. The President also had power to make treaties, and was the fountain of justice and clemency; he nominated ministers, initiated legislation; his sanction was necessary to all legislation; he could dissolve or prorogue the Assembly and could even dispense with it altogether for a period of six months. In return for all this he accepted full responsibility; in other words his ministers were to be his servants. It was the most arbitrary Constitution that France had enjoyed since the fall of the old regime. The *Corps Législatif*, which was to comprise 260 members elected by universal suffrage in constituencies which were numerical but not geographical units, was to sit for six years. Legislation was proposed by the President, prepared by a minister, submitted to the *Conseil d'état*, passed on to the *Corps Législatif*, which appointed a committee to deal with it. This committee could amend or even return it to the *Conseil d'état*. The *Corps Législatif* could submit amendments to its own committee, but if these were not accepted, they could only reject, not amend.

The Second Chamber or Senate comprised all Admirals, Marshals, and Cardinals; the remaining members were appointed by the President and held office for life. The functions of this body was to watch over the Constitution; and it could reject unconstitutional legislation.

Orleans family. Wits described it as *le premier vol de l'aigle* ; the censorship of the Press was regulated ; arrangements were made for the superannuation of judges at seventy and seventy-five ; fresh powers were given to the *préfets* ; railway and telegraphic enterprise was encouraged, the *Crédit Foncier* was founded, *Monts de Piété* and benefit societies were established, and public works were inaugurated in Paris. There was hardly any possible sphere of activity into which the Prince-President did not push his way. Thus was inaugurated the tone which was to be the key-note of the greater part of the reign ; for reign it may as well at once be called : its showy brilliancy, its encouragement of enterprise, its lavish, but not uneconomic, expenditure, its sincere liberalism and care for the people.

The elections to the new *Corps Législatif* were very carefully nursed by the President and, thanks to the abstention of many who objected to the new regime, the result was all that could be desired ; of the 260 members, no more than eight were avowedly hostile. Almost all the official candidates were successful at the polls. The Assembly proved itself a practical and, at first at any rate, a docile body, and swallowed all the legislation offered to it wholesale, though with occasional protests. The splendour and bustle continued unabated : art, finance, even costume, received the same tonic ; it was all a prelude to the final step for which, by the end of the summer, Napoleon considered the ground to be sufficiently prepared. He made a great tour of the provinces and delivered at Lyons a speech in which he clearly adumbrated Empire. Then, returning to Paris, he convoked the Senate and submitted to it his design for infringing that Constitution of which it was the guardian. The Senate sanctioned the re-establishment of the Empire, provided the people approved. In November therefore a plebiscite was taken, which resulted in an immense majority favourable to the proposals of the President (7,824,189 to 253,145). On 1 December the great State bodies proceeded to Saint Cloud to acclaim the Emperor, who replied to them in an inspiring speech, and on 2 December, 1852, Napoleon III entered Paris as Emperor.

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## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### THE SECOND EMPIRE

**N**APOLEON III, who was thus established on a throne almost as untrammelled by constitutional checks as that of his uncle, whatever his faults and limitations, was, at any rate, endowed with great activity, and had definite ideals and a definite scheme of Empire as well as a strong sense of personal responsibility. At home his ideal was that progress should go hand in hand with repression until the day when the bases of the State were so secure that liberty might be allowed to crown the edifice which authority had built up; repression was, in fact, only a necessary and even regrettable step towards liberty. Abroad there was to be a revival of firmness and a restoration of France to her proper place amongst the great Powers of Europe; the whole story of the reign is a witness to the exaggerated emphasis which Napoleon III laid on the need for an aggressive foreign policy; the meek submission which had characterized the rule of Louis Philippe was to be ended; but it was not to be replaced by a warlike policy, such as that of the Convention and the Committee of Public Safety. Peace was an essential part of Napoleon III's policy, but not peace at any price. How completely the hope of peace was unfounded, how continuously the Second Empire was lured from one war to another is one of the tragic features of a reign which was not without its good intentions; but the failure was less in heart than in head. It was bungling diplomacy—diplomacy which assumed that a strong line was possible without a strong force behind it—rather than false ideals that ruined the Second Empire.

As the Empire was destined to be involved so soon and so constantly in war, it will be well to clear the ground by first giving attention to internal administration, at the risk of an assault on chronological sequence. The era was one of material progress, fostered by all the energy of which the new Government was capable. Railway, telegraphic, and steamship development revolutionized commercial and industrial life. In spite of this the years 1853-6 were years of want and misery; the harvests were insufficient. The relaxation of the protective tariff was no set-off to the closing of the Russian market, consequent on the outbreak of the Crimean War. At the same moment came that terrible scourge, the cholera, while a series of great floods devastated large tracts of the country. This ground-work of misery was gilded over by the splendour of the Court, where a continuous series of fêtes was instituted to dazzle the public. Paris was in perpetual carnival; physically, too, the capital began to take a new appearance; the "genius" of Hausmann entirely modernized whole quarters, and drove great circles of boulevards through the ancient streets. This work was partly of military importance, and was perhaps the inevitable, though deplorable, fate of a city so much addicted to street fighting. Financial speculation led to the continual changing from hand to hand of riches, with all the consequent vulgar display; morals became more lax, and, taking its tone from above, society was drawn towards a cheap mysticism, which found an outlet in table-turning and spiritualistic séances. Such was the outside of the platter, while within was hunger, misery, cholera, and catastrophe.

The Constitution had placed practically unlimited power in the hands of the Emperor. Even had this not been the case, the *Corps Législatif*, conservative, mediocre, and docile, was not the sort of body from which either resistance or activity was to be expected. Limited to the function of rejecting amendments, its debates were carefully edited before reaching the carefully regulated Press. It was scarcely capable, under these conditions, of playing a useful or honourable part. The Senate, magnificent and dignified, was

endowed with functions so important that they never came into use ; and practical power was concentrated, so far as it was not monopolized by the Emperor, in the hands of the *Conseil d'état*. The stability, if not the prestige, of the new dynasty was considerably enhanced by the marriage of the Emperor and the birth of an heir. The search for a consort had been one of Napoleon's first preoccupations, but his advances were coldly received by the royal families of Europe. He was not unwilling to gratify his own predilections and to show his independence. In January, 1853, therefore, he married Eugénie Countess of Téba. The birth to this union of a son—the ill-fated Prince Imperial—seemed to secure the future of the Napoleonic Dynasty.

Politically it was an era of disillusionment. The Republican party was not only in eclipse, but its leaders had to a great extent been completely driven out of France. The Legitimists or partisans of "Henry V," the Comte de Chambord,<sup>1</sup> were forced by the rigidly passive attitude of their master into an inaction which excluded them from public life. They were, in fact, paralysed and even moribund ; Napoleon gave them little attention. It was otherwise with the Orleanists ; against them he directed many shafts and their leaders were driven into exile. The opposition, such as it was, came from a little group of politicians belonging to all parties and which included Guizot, Molé, de Falloux, Berryer, and Montalembert. Meanwhile, however, this Government, one of whose many principles was the maintenance of peace, had been suddenly dragged into a most unnecessary and, as events proved, bloody war. Since 1841 the Eastern question had been at rest, but now it was suddenly revived by the recrudescence of the rivalry between the Greek and Latin Churches for the "Holy Places". The rights of the Latin Church had been guaranteed by a Treaty of 1840 between Turkey and France. But the Greeks kept elbowing the Latins out, until in 1850 France was obliged to remind Turkey of the terms of the 1840 treaty. Russia, the protector of the Greek Church, took offence. The truth was that the Czar Nicholas had ambitions in the

<sup>1</sup> See Genealogical table of house of Bourbon, Vol. II, pp. 208, 209.

direction of Turkey and was willing to pick a quarrel with her in the hope that the break up of the Ottoman Empire might be hastened. Quite suddenly he put in a claim to a vague protectorate over the Greek Church subjects of Turkey. On 5 May a Russian ultimatum was presented to the Porte, and on 3 July Russian troops crossed the Pruth. Still hostilities hung fire, and no one took the situation very seriously; Austria attempted to mediate, and France made proposals to Russia for a settlement. Then, on 30 November, a Russian fleet sank a very inferior Turkish fleet off Sinope, an act which persuaded the French and English Cabinets to agree to armed intervention. An allied fleet was dispatched to the Black Sea, and on 27 February the Czar was invited to evacuate the "Principalities"; he made no reply and there was nothing for it but to declare war. On 27 March the ministry announced to the *Corps Législatif* the opening of hostilities. It is difficult to see what else the French Government could have done. They were guarantors, by the treaty of 1840, of the Latin interests. The Czar's action had been both peremptory and provocative. France had displayed forbearance and dignity, and was practically driven into hostilities. Of all the wars of Napoleon III the first was, perhaps, the most excusable, as it was also the most unnecessary.

The Crimean War, fought in a distant and very restricted arena, has little of the importance that attaches to a European War. It has, however, several points of special interest. It marks, in the first place, a transition in the conditions of warfare; we enter the period of trains and steamships, though neither had any direct effect on the course or result of the war, and, as a matter of fact, both in these respects and in that of armament, we are more at the end of an old regime than at the beginning of a new. In the second place, it was a wholly professional war which excited no national antagonisms and roused no uncontrollable forces; at the same time it was conspicuous for some feats of incomparable gallantry. On the other hand, with the single exception of Todleben, the Russian engineer who was responsible for the fortifications of Sevastopol, it threw up no commander of genius on either

side. Finally, although it was excessively bloody, it was fought with a fine display of courtesy on either side, and the animosity between the opposing troops seemed to be confined to the actual fields of battle.

In February, 1854, the Russian ministers were withdrawn from Paris and London, and the French and English ministers from St. Petersburg. Shortly afterwards war was declared, public opinion in both France and England being so incensed after Sinope that it would not wait for Austria, which Power was interested in the withdrawal of the Russians from the Danubian Principalities. While the British fleet was rather ineffectively scouring the Black Sea, the vigorous action of the Turks under Omar Pasha brought about the abandonment of the Principalities, after which there was little reason for Austrian intervention. In September the allies, under Lord Raglan and St. Arnaud, decided to invade the Crimea and take Sevastopol, the chief Russian arsenal on the Black Sea. On 20 September they won a bloody victory on the River Alma which, if the allied commanders had acted vigorously, might have ended the war. But they hesitated to rush Sevastopol and gave Menshikoff time to block the entrance of the harbour by sinking the Russian fleet in it; leaving the defence of the city to the sailors, Menshikoff withdrew the bulk of the army northwards. These events quite altered the situation and ruined the allies' plan of campaign, which was to attack the town from the north in conjunction with the fleet. They now circled round the town (24-27 September), to attack it from the south where the defences were weak. But once more the hesitations of the leaders spoilt the chances of the allies. By waiting (until 17 October) for their heavy artillery, they gave Todleben time to throw up defences which defied them for eleven months, and cost many thousands of lives.

The Russians were by this time twice as numerous as the allies, and at Balaklava (25 October) and Inkerman (5 November) challenged them to pitched battle. But actual battle was the least of the dangers to which the allies were exposed; their losses in action were nothing compared with

their losses by the cholera, the failure of the commissariat, and the complete lack of necessities. By the spring the efforts of the Home Governments had altered all this and the attack on Sevastopol was renewed. The death of the Czar (2 March, 1855) raised hopes of peace. The efforts of Drouyn de Lhuys and Lord John Russell in this direction were, however, fruitless, and realizing this both ministers resigned. The struggle was renewed, and a new ally was found in Piedmont. That power sent a contingent to the front, whose importance was, as we shall see, not wholly military. In May Pélissier took over the command from Canrobert who had replaced St. Arnaud. It was not, however, until September that the French succeeded, at the second attempt, in taking the Malakhoff, the English being repulsed for the second time from the Redan. The capture of the Malakhoff gave the allies possession of the southern half of Sevastopol, and provided a fresh and favourable opportunity for ending the war.

The news of the fall of Sevastopol was received with feelings of great relief by the allies. Military honour being satisfied, it was obviously desirable that hostilities should be brought to a close, for there was nothing else to fight for. It was now that the capricious nature of Napoleon III's judgment began to show itself; he was filled with fantastic ideas of a fresh offensive, being apparently oblivious to the fact that the allied armies were not in a condition to respond to a new call on them. He was encouraged in this intemperate attitude by the bellicose character of Palmerston. Pressure from the Powers and the gradually increasing feeling that the armies were incapable of further effort staved off the danger of a prolongation of hostilities; Austria offered her mediation and Prussia used her influence with Russia. A Congress was summoned to Paris, in which Russia, England, France, Turkey, and Austria were represented and to which Prussia and Piedmont sent delegates. On 25 February, 1856, an armistice was concluded and on 30 March a treaty was signed (Treaty of Paris) of which the following is a summary of the terms: (1) The Black Sea was neutralized; (2) the Powers formally accepted the *firman* of religious liberty

which the Sultan had already granted, and acknowledged that they had no right to intervene between the Porte and its subjects; (3) The Danube was opened to navigation; (4) Russia abandoned her protectorate over the Danubian Principalities, which were given independence under the suzerainty of the Porte; (5) a small strip of Bessarabia was attached to the Danubian Principalities; Turkey and Russia accepted their old boundaries as before the war, and the former was admitted to the enjoyment of European international law. Austria, France, and England pledged themselves to enforce the treaty, if necessary, at the point of the sword. The Treaty of Paris was perfectly nugatory, but by saving the face of Russia, on whom no humiliation was inflicted, it served to put an end to a war of which everyone was weary.

The Congress had brought to the French capital two men who, although they took humble rank among the plenipotentiaries, were destined to have an important influence on the destinies of Europe and in particular on those of France; these were Cavour and Bismarck. It was against the great genius of the former that the shallow brain of Napoleon III was first to be pitted. Already, while the Congress was still in progress, he had hearkened to the voice of the Italian charmer. Camillo Cavour, the minister of the King of Sardinia, was the son of a Piedmontese father and a Genevese mother; thoroughly non-Italian in appearance and temperament, he was the true architect of Italian unity. His object from the moment he assumed office in 1852 was to keep the Italian question so constantly before Europe that, when the moment came to attack Austria, support should be forthcoming from the Powers, of whom France was considered the most promising ally. For Napoleon III was not afraid to carry on a secret diplomacy behind the backs of his ministers, and had already whispered words of encouragement into the ears of the Piedmontese ambassador: "Some day," he had said, "the two countries will find themselves companions in arms for the noble cause of Italy". In order, as it were, to stamp this private understanding, Cavour had been clever

enough to send a Piedmontese contingent to assist the allies in the Crimea, thereby placing France under an obligation to Piedmont.

At the Congress Cavour pleaded for some Italian recompense for Piedmont's services. Any such recompense would have been a flat provocation to Austria, and the Congress wanted peace, not fresh complications. But, if Cavour got no material concession, he secured what was even more valuable, a practical pledge from the Emperor that he would take the side of Piedmont if war broke out between that State and Austria. That was exactly what he had been playing for. He went home with the assurance that the autocrat of France, a man of sentiment and one whose word could be trusted, was on his side. He could afford to wait, and he did not have to wait long. Within two years, the crisis of which Napoleon had avowed the presentiment came to a head.

The elections of 1857 passed off uneventfully. There were indeed small puffs of awakening public opinion, but on the whole the wind blew steadily in favour of the imperial craft; the Government candidates were nearly all returned and the new *corps législatif* differed very slightly from the old. The main political interest centred in the question of the relations between Church and State. Napoleon himself was personally anxious to be a patron of the Catholic Church, and apart from any personal predilection it was obviously to his advantage to conciliate Catholic feeling, for this was his best hope of cutting the ground from under the feet of the legitimists. It was in the attempt to conciliate Catholic feeling and at the same time to retain the support of the liberals that the Empire made shipwreck. Napoleon might have been able to carry out this contradictory policy at home; but when he became involved in the affairs of Italy, where liberalism soon became associated with the policy of a united Italy and the policy of a united Italy came to imply the overthrow of the temporal power of the Pope, he was destined to find himself in an impossible dilemma, confronted with the choice of abandoning liberalism in order to retain the



good-will of the Catholics, or of offending the Catholics by favouring the liberals. He made an ingenious attempt to solve the problem by advocating an Italian federation under the patronage of the Pope. This was an admirable academic plan, but it betrayed a hopeless misconception of the politics of the Peninsula.

Meanwhile the Italian aspirations of Napoleon had not yet taken definite shape. The attempt of the Italian nationalist, Orsini, on the Emperor's life on 14 January, 1858, might have been expected to modify Napoleon's Italian aspirations. By a curious twist of fortune the revelations at the would-be assassin's trial only served to emphasize the Emperor's sympathy for the cause of united Italy, for he was brought to believe that his life would never be safe until he had done something for Italy, and so the instinct of self-preservation became an additional incentive. The Orsini episode led directly to the famous interview of Plombières (July, 1858), when, by the invitation of the Emperor, Cavour came to Plombières, and there was an exchange of views on the Italian question between the French Emperor and the Italian statesman, frank to the point of folly on the part of the former, and subtle in a high degree on the part of the latter. Napoleon spoke quite openly of the prospect of war between Piedmont and Austria and of his readiness to help the former, and, at the same time, suggested a marriage between his cousin, Prince Napoleon (son of Jérôme, King of Westphalia) and the Princess Clotilde, daughter of Victor Emmanuel; this marriage was celebrated on 30 January, 1859. The months that followed the interview of Plombières were critical in the extreme. Napoleon, genuinely anxious to forward Cavour's policy, was pulled forward by his own liberal sentiments and the diplomacy of that able statesman, drawn back by his fear of alienating Catholic opinion, as well as by the opposition of his own Foreign Minister, Walewski, and the strong public feeling in favour of peace. He was, in fact, in two minds and presented a sorry picture of indetermination. Cavour, on the other hand, never wavered in his policy—war against Austria in the spring of 1859 with France as Pied-

mont's ally. He played his cards with infinite skill; and Napoleon (who caused an inspired pamphlet—"Napoleon III and Italy"<sup>1</sup>—to be published in January, 1859, which gave expression to his sympathy for Italian nationalist aspirations) seemed to be following with all the pliability that could be desired, when suddenly he gave way before the protests of the Powers.

Cavour's warlike preparations and his open demand for the expulsion of Austria from Italy had greatly alarmed England and Prussia, and a proposal was made for a Congress to which Austria agreed. Napoleon swerved round to the idea that he could do something for the cause of Italy by insisting on the inclusion of Piedmont as a party to the Congress, and telegraphed to Cavour to agree to disarmament on this condition. There was no alternative for Cavour but to accept. His whole policy was ruined and he was plunged in despair, when suddenly, and only just in time, an ultimatum was received from Austria (23 April). Her patience had given way and she had played into the hands of her enemies; a few hours more and Cavour's final adhesion to the disarmament and Congress would have been given.<sup>2</sup> The end of the long diplomatic struggle, therefore, was that Cavour got his way though not by the means he had contrived. He had triumphed owing to the breakdown in the temper of his opponent, not by the steadiness which he had hoped to instil into his ally. Much more humiliating was the position of that ally: Napoleon, at first inclined to war, then to peace, had been involved in the former just when he was set on the latter.

To use Cavour's own phrase, "the die was now cast"—there was no possibility of avoiding war. On 29 April the Austrians crossed the Ticino, and on 12 May Napoleon landed at Genoa to put himself at the head of the French

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon still adhered to the idea of a united federal Italy under the presidency of the Pope, in the hope of reconciling the two incompatible interests which he had at heart.

<sup>2</sup> He had, in fact, actually committed himself to disarmament (19 April).

army. It was the first spadeful in the long process of digging his own grave. In the campaign of 1859 the Austrians started with a great advantage. They had 200,000 troops in Italy, 144,000 of whom were available for active operations, and by the suddenness of their ultimatum they had stolen a march on the French, so that a vigorous offensive would have given them Turin before a single French soldier could have landed in the Peninsula. But a vigorous offensive was the one method of warfare for which Austria was traditionally and temperamentally unfitted; moreover the mere association of the names Napoleon and Italy, got on their nerves. They heard a voice in every wind, saw a prospective Arcola or Rivoli in every movement of French troops, with the result that, instead of a vigorous offensive, these invaders sought to stand on the defensive. The plan of the allies was to abandon Turin and push the bulk of their forces forward towards Casale and Alessandria, in the hope that this would fill the Austrians with alarm for their communications and stop their advance on Turin. This ruse was entirely successful. Giulay, the Austrian Commander, pushed a feeling force southward to the right bank of the Po, which was so roughly handled at Montebello on 20 May that he was confirmed in the belief that the French were making for Lombardy. Napoleon, however, now completely changed the plan of campaign and decided to move his entire army across the enemy's front so as to threaten their right wing and sweep round it to Milan. It was a thoroughly mistaken and highly dangerous manœuvre, and, but for the Austrian lethargy, the allies might have been caught in detail. Giulay, however, retired over the Ticino, followed by the allies, who drove their opponents back on Magenta, capturing the railway bridge before it could be blown up. At Magenta battle was joined, and the issue of the day hung in the balance until MacMahon, who had crossed the Ticino higher up, took the Austrians in flank. The allies lost 700 killed, 3200 wounded, and 600 missing; the Austrian losses were very heavy and included 5000 prisoners. The Battle of Magenta had two results; it put Milan in the hands of the allies (8 June) and it laid bare the incompetence of

Napoleon as a general. So far from directing the battle, he had merely "contemplated a portion of it" during the entire day, for he was totally ignorant of the conditions under which a battle is fought, and apparently incapable of grasping them. He was not a coward, but his high sensibility caused him to be very much moved by the horrors attendant on war. Magenta had thus resolved itself into a pure soldiers' battle (4 June). Lacking direction from its commander-in-chief, the allied army, in the process of hustling the Austrians, became involved in a further bloody engagement at Melignano on 8 June—an utterly fruitless victory.

The Austrians were by this time as alarmed at the political situation as they were at the military; for all the Central Italian States were in a ferment; and they decided to abandon everything south of the Po, and to make a stand on the Mincio. Just in front of that river the two armies—in about equal strength, 160,000 each—blundered into a further uncontrolled *mêlée* at Solferino. It was a terribly costly battle and it went to the hardest-hitter; <sup>1</sup> the allies were once more victorious. But this desperate, uncontrolled, hand-to-hand fighting was just the kind that Napoleon's nerves could not stand. After Solferino he completely broke down, and, partly from sheer horror of bloodshed, partly, perhaps, from his love of a *coup de théâtre*, partly, too, because the protests of the Catholics at home were becoming vehement, he proceeded, without consulting King Victor Emmanuel, to negotiate with Austria. On 8 July an armistice was arranged; on 11 July the two Emperors met at Villafranca and terms of peace were concluded. Lombardy was ceded, not to Piedmont but to France, on the understanding that she should hand it to Piedmont, an unnecessary slight to the latter. Venice remained Austrian. The Italian princes were to be restored; Victor Emmanuel signed the treaty with the reservation—

<sup>1</sup> Losses at Solferino :—

	<i>French.</i>	<i>Piedmontese.</i>	<i>Austrians.</i>
Killed . . .	1600	700	{ 13,000
Wounded . . .	8500	3500	
Missing . . .	1500	1200	9000

"for as much as concerns me". The final peace was signed at Zurich on 10 November. Cavour, bitterly chagrined, resigned office. He had vainly urged his master to stand firm and call Italy to his support.

The unexpected treaty was rendered utterly nugatory by the determined national uprising of the Central States of Italy. Inspired by Cavour, they brushed aside the clause of the treaty which restored their former rulers, and declared for annexation to Piedmont. The Grand Duchy of Tuscany and with it the crown of Italy, was offered to Victor Emmanuel, who accepted it on condition that the step had the approval of Europe. Napoleon III was once more in a dilemma. The next step as he knew would be the Papal States and already the Catholics of France were anathematizing his policy. On the whole his inclinations were to let Piedmont have a free hand and he looked to Palmerston and Russell for support, but to avoid offending the Catholic party he wanted to have his hand forced.

It was decided that the position of the Italian States must form the subject of another Congress; but just as the Congress was about to assemble, Napoleon, reverting to a favourite expedient, caused the publication of an inspired article, "The Pope and the Congress," in which he at last openly advocated the despoiling of the Pope. Only the city of Rome was to be left to the Papacy. His doctrine was one familiar to modern politicians: the robbing of the Church in its own interests—"the smaller the territory the greater the sovereign"; with these paradoxes he announced that Liberalism had won the day over Catholicism in his mind. The Empire was alienated from the Church. Veuillot's famous clerical journal, "l'Univers," was suppressed. Walewski, who had been lukewarm in Italian matters, was dismissed. What was at the back of the Emperor's mind? He hoped to win popular opinion once more by a great *coup* which would outweigh the affront offered to the Church by his declaration against the Pope; this *coup* was to be the annexation by France of Nice and Savoy, a proceeding which had been discussed at Plombières, but had been dropped by Napoleon when he broke

off the war at Villafranca and left Italy in a semi-liberated state.

During the early months of 1860 rumours of this intention got abroad, and aroused profound indignation in England. But Napoleon, through Persigny, made the very plausible reply that he required some protection against the new Italy which England was helping to create. Besides, it was beginning to seem ridiculous that Piedmont, who had received Lombardy as a present from her ally, should go on absorbing Italian Principalities while her ally received nothing. On 1 March Napoleon made his intention public. Cavour made a last effort to preserve Nice, but finally gave way. On 24 March the treaty was signed, and was afterwards confirmed by huge popular majorities in both Savoy and Nice.

During the whole of the Italian crisis the relations between France and England had been of a peculiar character. Palmerston and, in an even greater degree, Russell were violent champions of the cause of liberation in Italy. It was only by the constant efforts of the Queen that the Government was persuaded to observe a strict neutrality during the war and the negotiations for peace.<sup>1</sup> But there was another tie between the Emperor of the French and the liberal Government of England: to wit, a mutually sympathetic outlook in the matter of international fiscal relations. Loyal to imperial traditions in so many respects Napoleon was a traitor to them in this; he was an out-and-out free trader. France was, by tradition, protectionist; the brief lapse to free trade at the close of the eighteenth century<sup>2</sup> had been quickly forgotten in the implacable tariff war waged by Napoleon I against England. It was only with the accession of Napoleon III that free trade doctrines were revived, and in June, 1856,

<sup>1</sup> "Letters of Queen Victoria," III. 478, London, 1907. Lord John Russell to Queen Victoria, 1 December, 1859. "Lord John Russell is certainly not prepared to say that a case may not arise when the interests of Great Britain might not require that she should give material support to the Emperor of the French." And Queen Victoria to Lord John Russell: "Under no pretence will the Queen depart from her position of neutrality in the Italian quarrel".

<sup>2</sup> *Supra*, II. 367, 368.

there was a proposal to remove all prohibitions, following a general reduction of the tariff; but the scheme had to be dropped in deference to the outcry of the affected interests. At the end of the year 1859 it was revived, and Cobden visited Paris and "laid siege to the Emperor"—an imaginative sentimentalist with an unrivalled command of sweeping generalizations was just the man to capture this by no means impregnable fortress. Cobden and Michel Chevalier sketched out a treaty, and on 5 January, 1860, Napoleon announced the impending change. On 23 January the Commercial Treaty was signed, on the Emperor's responsibility alone; for he had, by the Constitution, full rights to conclude treaties.

It was not so much a free trade treaty as a general reduction of tariffs; but it had the effect of opening the French market to British goods. It was not by any means favourably received, for it involved a serious dislocation of long-established conditions; moreover, the fact that it had been introduced by virtue of the sovereign's prerogative wounded the reviving liberal feeling of the country.<sup>1</sup>

The year 1860, which opened with the Commercial Treaty with England, saw France embroiled in China and in Syria and to a great extent an agitated spectator of the extraordinary events in Italy. It also saw the inauguration (24 November) of the Liberal Empire. In Italy the events of the year were decisive and France played but a halting part in them. She watched, not without anxiety but without interference, the

<sup>1</sup> Terms of the Commercial Treaty with England (23 January, 1860):—All ancient prohibitions withdrawn.

*Thread and Cloth.*—Admitted to France *ad valorem* duty not exceeding 30 per cent for first five years and 25 per cent for the next five years.

*Iron, Steel, Machinery.*—Same provisions (a Commission to be appointed to fix a specific duty to replace *ad valorem* duty).

*Coal.*—Three francs 60 cents per ton duty to be reduced by half; system of zones established.

*Wines, Spirits, Silk, Clothing.*—Admitted to England on favourable terms. Wine duty reduced from 5s. to 3s. per gallon with promise of further reductions; 8s. 5d. a gallon on spirits. Clothing and silk exempt from all duty.

expedition of Garibaldi and The Thousand to Sicily (May, 1860), and when the gallant adventurer passed from Sicily to Calabria she joined England in a protest. Then came Cavour's great attempt to turn Garibaldi's triumph to the profit of Piedmont, and his forestalling of his rival in the invasion of the Papal States. This was to provoke France to the top of her bent, and Cavour took a great risk when he invaded Umbria and the Marches, but by this time he thoroughly understood Napoleon. Thouvenel, the Foreign Minister, indeed protested vigorously, only to find his protests modified into complete harmlessness by the Emperor. This was an indication that France, while continuing to protest in order to appease Catholic feeling, would not intervene forcibly, so as not to offend liberal feeling. The rout of the papal troops at Castelfidardo (on 18 September) by the Piedmontese, stirred the French Catholics to the quick; the Emperor scolded benevolently, well knowing that Cavour understood that he would not interfere. For a moment it seemed that he might actually extend to the King of Naples the protection he had withheld from the Pope. For the French fleet went to Gaëta, only, however, to leave as soon as matters became critical. When Gaëta fell, a French ship conveyed the fugitive monarch to Rome. This was the extreme limit of Napoleon's interference.

Meanwhile France had been involved in two quarrels outside the bonds of Europe: the first was in China. There France and England had coinciding interests, at least so far as the suppression of native treachery and violence was concerned. In 1858 a long series of disputes between Europeans and Chinese had been concluded by a treaty, the ratification of which was to take place at Peking; but in 1859 it was found that access to Peking was prevented by the blocking of the mouth of the river. A joint expedition was decided on, and on 24-25 October, after many vicissitudes, the allies procured the signature of a treaty which gave security to all foreigners in China and protection to the Christian religion, stipulated for the opening of six more ports (including Tientsin), and guaranteed the equality of all Europeans in



the Celestial Empire. At the same time an indemnity of 60,000,000 francs was imposed on the Chinese. Affairs in Syria and the Lebanon, where grave disturbances had occurred in the same year (1860), threatened to lead to hostilities in that quarter also; but the Turkish ambassador cunningly prolonged negotiations until Turkey had had time to transport 20,000 men to Syria; the matter was remitted to a Commission of the European Powers which drew up an administrative system for the Lebanon (9 June, 1861).

The unpopularity of his double-sided Italian policy, and the opposition of the commercial interests to the free trade treaty, now prompted the Emperor to abandon the attempt to govern France by purely arbitrary means; if there was to be unpopularity let others share it. Arbitrary government is only possible where there is either no opposition or ample means to crush it. Opposition having appeared, it was incumbent on the Emperor to revert to the party system. In November, 1860, therefore, the Empire was ostensibly "liberalized". Complete freedom was given to the Senate and *Corps Législatif* to move and discuss an address to the Crown each year. Ministers (without portfolios) were to sit in the Assembly to defend ministerial policy. The Government in future would govern, the Opposition oppose, and the Emperor mediate. Such at least was Napoleon's idea, but unfortunately the parties to whom these rôles had been allotted merely combined to demand further powers. On 31 December the Emperor unloaded himself of a further burden of responsibilities—financial this time. No supplementary credit was to be made without a vote. The ministerial budget was to be divided into sections, on each of which the Chambers were to vote. All decrees involving financial changes were to emanate from the finance minister. The fact was that the Emperor and his confidential advisers (such as Fould) were becoming more and more alarmed at the financial situation. Bank rate was 6 per cent, there was an annual debt of 100,000,000 francs and a floating debt of 1,000,000,000. The nation must be associated with this situation.

Only a year intervened between the Government and the

general elections; and that year saw the solidifying of the scattered parties, Democrats and Republicans of various shades, Legitimists, Orleanists, and Catholics, into a compact opposition. This solidification was taking place throughout the year 1862. The Catholics, in particular, had been galled to the quick by the treatment meted out to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. At a meeting of the Society the Bishop of Angoulême had apostrophized the Emperor as "Judas" (16 October, 1862); in retaliation the Government declared that charitable societies were under its supervision, and threatened to take the appointment of the President of this Society (like that of the Grand Master of the Freemasons) into its own hands.

And while his relations with the Catholics were becoming more and more strained, the course of affairs in Italy, intimately related as they were with the Church question at home, was causing more and more embarrassment to the Emperor. There Cavour's successor, Ricasoli, was bringing fresh pressure upon Pius IX, pressure in which Napoleon, in spite of doublings and twistings, was obliged to co-operate. The reappearance of Garibaldi with his simple directness and his war-cry "Rome or death" threw the politicians into paroxysms. Would the firebrand attack the French, and if so would the French retaliate? On 29 August at Aspromonte he was captured by Piedmontese troops. It was none too soon, for the approaching general elections and the violence of the Catholic opposition had caused Napoleon to turn round to a partial defence of the Papacy. Drouyn de Lhuys had been recalled (October, 1862) and the French Government began to blow cold on Victor Emmanuel.

In the early days of 1862 there came one golden opportunity for the Emperor to rally public opinion to his side. The troubles of Poland came to a new head. The Russian policy in that country had provoked the most determined nationalist feeling; protests had been followed by reprisals, and Polish patriots had been massacred in cold blood. In 1861 Russia adopted the expedient of getting rid of inconvenient patriots by means of forced enlistment. Public

opinion in France was thoroughly roused. The woes of Poland appealed to liberals because the cries were cries of wounded freedom, to Catholics because they were religious, to the general public because championship of oppressed nationalities was the traditional policy of France. Here, then, was Napoleon's chance; to strike for Poland would have been the best preparation for the general election. It was his misfortune that, on this the one occasion when an active policy was the popular demand, political circumstances prevented him from gratifying it. For one thing the *entente* between France and Russia after the Crimea made it difficult for France to interfere with the oppressor of the Poles. Even more paralysing was the behaviour of Prussia, who, under the guidance of Bismarck, had already embarked on the astute policy which was to end in the humiliation of France. Bismarck hurried ostentatiously to the side of Russia, and his unsolicited overtures ended in an agreement between the two Powers for joint action (8 February, 1862). This was most embarrassing to France, and her intervention was consequently restricted to co-operation with England and Austria in the presentation of a quite fruitless identical note. The Polish insurrection, unsupported, was soon quelled, and French public opinion was further alienated from the Government. It is instructive to reflect that this result was largely caused by the action of Prussia.

Thus the Government faced the general election with its credit largely diminished and, in spite of the energetic wire-pulling of Persigny, the election (31 May-1 June) brought a considerable change in the constitution of the *Corps Législatif*. Of the 7,000,000 odd voters who went to the poll, the opposition secured about one-third of the suffrages. Henceforth a compact body of deputies were to occupy the opposition benches. This body included Thiers, Jules Favre, Émile Ollivier, Jules Simon, Ernest Picard and Berryer, and seventeen of them were Republicans. But the importance of this opposition was not to be measured by numbers alone. The Emperor recognized the changed conditions by dismissing Persigny, and creating the new office of Minister of

State,<sup>1</sup> to which Billault was first appointed (23 June) and after his death Rouher (18 October). It was Rouher who became the intermediary between Morny, the Emperor's blood relation, staunch supporter and evil-genius, and Ollivier, and who won over the latter to co-operation with the Government in the trades union legislation of May, 1864.

The real opportunity of the opposition was to come in the field of foreign rather than internal politics. The restless activity of Napoleon III's ambition had involved France in a vast undertaking beyond the Atlantic. As it had been with his uncle, so it was with him; the failure of France to seize her colonial opportunities in the eighteenth century galled Napoleon III, and in the troubles of Mexico, a country of immense potential wealth and three times as large as France, he thought he saw an opportunity for restoring the balance in some degree. The condition of Mexico had long been a matter of concern even beyond its own borders; the country was rent in twain between the Democrats, who opposed the privileged position of the Catholic Church (the greatest landholders in the country) and looked to the United States for support, perhaps even for ultimate absorption, and the Aristocrats, who found their chief rallying ground in the Church and looked to Europe to provide not only the necessary military force, but also the prince who should at once restore order, lay the foundations of a powerful state, and at the same time guarantee the independence of the country. So early as 1846 the aristocratic party in Mexico had attempted to persuade various European Powers to throw themselves into their cause, and it is interesting to note that even the Government of Louis Philippe had lent a favourable ear to their appeal. The Revolution of 1848, however, had put a stop to the negotiations.

In 1857 Mexico was plunged into civil war in which the protagonists were Miramon on the Aristocratic side and Juarez on the Democratic. In 1861 the Democratic party triumphed and Juarez became President. He proved himself

<sup>1</sup> The idea was that the Minister of State should be the mouthpiece of the Government in the Assembly.

violent and incapable, and by repudiating the liabilities of the country to Britain, France, and Spain, provoked European intervention. A joint expedition of 6000 men, led by the Spaniard, Prim, was undertaken by the three Powers. Napoleon conceived this to be his grand opportunity, and when Prim arranged preliminaries of peace with Juarez' Government he repudiated the terms and took over the full responsibility for the future of the Mexican expedition. He now embarked on a grand design for rehabilitating the French Colonial Empire, and for checking the southward advance of the United States. Meeting with a repulse in its advance into the interior, the French army in Mexico was reinforced until its strength was 30,000 men ; in June, 1863, this force entered the capital and a Provisional Government was set up. It then became necessary to find a royal prince who would accept this perilous throne, and on 8 July, 1863, it was offered to the Archduke Maximilian, brother of the Emperor Francis Joseph, who, after some hesitation, accepted it. Such was the position in Mexico at the moment we have now reached. The sequel of the tragic story may be narrated here.

In June, 1864, Maximilian landed in Mexico. He was a gallant, honest, firm, and high-minded man, but not gifted with the high qualities of statesmanship which the situation demanded. His first proceeding was to hold out an olive branch to the Republicans, by confirming the sales of Church property which had already taken place. The only result was the alienation of the Church. Then he found himself unable to fulfil the impossible financial pledges he had given to France, and provided her with the excuse which she ultimately used for withdrawing her forces and leaving him to his fate. For a time, however, all went reasonably well. Then in 1865 the United States, freed from the pressure of the Civil War, urged Napoleon to withdraw the French troops from Mexico. The Emperor was the more ready to do so on account of the troubled condition of Europe ; and in March, 1867, he agreed to the proposal.

This was the signal for the revival of the Republican activity in Mexico. Maximilian, seeing that his position was

hopeless if he was not to receive support from Europe, thought of abdication, but was persuaded by his wife to remain while she went to Europe to make a personal appeal to the Powers. She interviewed Napoleon and Pius IX and, when she realized that her husband was to be left to his fate, went out of her mind. Hearing this, Maximilian broke down and started for the coast. More courageous counsels, however, prevailed, and he returned to the capital a broken-hearted man, only waiting for the consummation of his cruel fate. He joined Miramon at Queretaro, and in the defence of that place did his utmost to secure for himself a soldier's end. He was betrayed, however, by his second in command, tried by court-martial, and executed (19 June). Thus ended Napoleon's unfortunate day-dream in the tragic death of his miserable protégé; his desertion of Maximilian, a gallant man who deserved a better fate, is the greatest stain on his honour.

France had been driven into the abandonment of her protégé in Mexico by the imminence of critical questions much nearer home, and the necessity for concentrating her attention on European affairs. The most alarming of these questions was that of the relations of Austria and Prussia over Schleswig Holstein. The fate of neither Schleswig nor Holstein concerned France very nearly, but the relations of Austria and Prussia were of very great importance to her. Austria and Prussia had drawn together in November, 1863, both of them wishing to avoid the Congress which Napoleon desired to summon in order to settle the Polish question, and they were also united in desiring to bring federal pressure from Germany to bear on Denmark in this matter of "the Duchies". Denmark had, in March, 1863, proclaimed a Constitution which bound Schleswig politically, and Holstein financially, to Denmark. This was held to be a contravention of a protocol that had been signed in London in 1852, and provoked great anger in Germany, and when in November, 1863, King Frederick VII of Denmark died, his successor, Christian IX, was opposed by the Germanic federation; Bismarck, who had previously given reassuring pledges to Denmark, seeing the trend of German public opinion, at once

threatened Denmark with war if the Constitution were not withdrawn. Austria, jealous for the right to lead Germany, associated herself with Prussia, and in February, 1864, Austria and Prussia jointly invaded Schleswig Holstein. Denmark was trampled down while Europe looked on. For France this policy of looking on was utterly fatuous; here was her opportunity for checking the advance of "the northern Piedmont," and by failing to take it she laid up for herself the cruel surprises of 1870. For the second time she failed to strike when it was to her interest to do so.

On 30 October, 1864, a treaty was concluded between Prussia, Austria, and Denmark, by which—the Germanic federation being ignored—Lauenburg, Holstein, and Schleswig were ceded to Austria and Prussia for joint administration; Denmark thereby losing about two-fifths of her territories. To Bismarck this joint administration was only a step towards an annexation from which Austria should be excluded, and for the next eighteen months his whole energies were devoted to the compassing of Austria's downfall. To effect this he had to carry his master, King William, with him, to secure the alliance of Victor Emmanuel, and to contrive that France should remain neutral.<sup>1</sup> Austria, who looked for the support of the South German States, suggested that the conquered "Duchies" should be handed over to the Duke of Augustenburg, whose claims had the support of the German Princes. Prussia then refused, suggesting impossible conditions. Finally a convention was arranged by the personal efforts of the two monarchs. Austria was given the administration of Holstein, Prussia that of Schleswig, while the small district of Lauenburg went to Prussia for a money payment (Convention of Gastein, 14 August, 1865). Both France and England protested and, in order to propitiate the former, Bismarck proceeded to Biarritz to interview the Emperor and the one-sided duel between these two men began, which was not to end until the Empire of the latter ended. Napoleon's position was not a simple one; the essentials of the complicated and changing situation in Europe were not easy to distinguish, nor was

<sup>1</sup> Cambridge Modern History, xi. 437.

his confused brain well qualified to bring him to a clear judgment. Italy still held the uppermost place in his mind. By a Convention of 15 September, 1864, he had arranged for the gradual evacuation of the Papal States and for the transference of the Italian Government from Turin to Florence. His failure in Mexico prompted him to do something, something if possible that would strike the eye; and at that moment he no doubt actually believed that he could use Prussia as a catpaw to humiliate Austria, and snatch Venice for Italy and possibly something for himself on the Rhine. It was, perhaps, not unnatural that he should have singled out Austria and not Prussia as the German Power from which danger was likely to proceed, but it was none the less a profound and terrible error of judgment. In order to preserve the balance in Germany his plan was to encourage Bismarck's idea of an alliance with Victor Emmanuel; and Bismarck was thus able (8 April, 1866), though not without difficulty, to arrange (by Napoleon's good offices) an alliance between Prussia and Italy by which he triumphed over Austria, and paved the way to his future triumph over France. Austria, bidding for South German support, had revived the Augustenburg claim, and was at once accused by Prussia of a breach of the Treaty of Gastein. On 16 June, 1866, hostilities broke out. Austria persuaded France to promise neutrality on condition that Venice should be handed over to her at the close of the war, when she could present it to her protégé Italy. Napoleon had, in fact, "put his money on the wrong horse," and was accepting a bribe for abstention from the very Power he should have supported.

The details of the campaign of 1866, which ended in the crushing defeat of Austria at Königgrätz, do not concern the historian of France. Its results, however, were of the most profound importance. From that moment France became alive to the fact that her true antagonist was not Austria but Prussia. It was impossible for her to stand by and watch the gradual growth of that power until the entire balance of Europe was destroyed. Austria, in conformity with her pledges and in the hope of securing active assistance from



Napoleon, surrendered Venice to France—greatly to the annoyance of Italy, which power naturally resented the necessity of receiving as a gift the fruits of her own military efforts. It would have been well for France if she had frankly recognized her error of judgment and made up her mind to armed intervention in order to impose limitations on Prussia. Drouyn de Lhuys had the sense to see this, but he was unable to get his way; and, in truth, France was far from being prepared for war. Napoleon, therefore, resorted to his favourite and fruitless cry for a congress.

Bismarck, with his far-sighted political vision, had determined to use the Prussian triumph, not as a means of humiliating Austria, but as a means of consolidating Prussia at the expense of the small states of North Germany. At Nikolsburg on 26 July he laid down his terms: the abolition of the German Confederation, the annexation by Prussia of the Duchies, and the hegemony of Prussia north of the Main; and the Treaty of Prague (24 August) embodied the terms of Nikolsburg. On 5 August, 1866, before the Treaty of Prague had been actually signed, France struck in with a demand for compensation; she asked for the Rhine frontier as far as, and including, Mainz and including the Bavarian Palatinate; a demand which at once flung Bavaria on to the side of Prussia. It is easy to condemn Napoleon for making such a demand at such a time. But the honour of France, and the stability of his dynasty, impelled him to insist that if Prussia was to expand, France must expand with her. The misfortune was that he was not in a position to enforce his demands at the point of the sword; in themselves they were not unreasonable, but, put forward without the ultimate intention of seeing them through at all costs, they only brought humiliation to France, and served to unite Germany. Bismarck's reply to the demands which Drouyn de Lhuys urged through the mouth of Benedetti was that "the cession of German territory was an impossibility," and that the pressure of the claim would mean an alliance between Prussia and Austria, the invasion of France by an army of 800,000 men, and the seizure of Alsace. To which startling threat all that Bene-

detti could answer was that the failure to secure a territorial concession would involve an internal revolution—as if that would affect Bismarck. France met with a humiliating rebuff, and failed to obtain a square inch of territory.

The events of the year 1866 had in fact entirely altered the policy of France. From the Peace of Prague she was confronted with the prospect of the consolidation of Germany under Prussia. Unless she could gain corresponding compensations—and she had already discovered that this was improbable—war between Prussia and France was inevitable. The only questions—and they were of the last importance—were when and under what conditions it would break out. From the French point of view a successful war against Prussia involved two conditions: first, that she should reorganize her army until she was, as far as circumstances permitted, the equal of Prussia in the field. But as her practically stationary population was confronted with a rapidly increasing Prussian and German birth-rate, a full military equality was hopeless; therefore, in the second place, it was necessary that she should make war only with the support of adequate allies.<sup>1</sup> Both these conditions involved the postponement of the crisis until she should have built up a reorganized army and laid the foundations of the necessary alliances. To Prussia on the other hand it would be an advantage to fight the quarrel out soon, before the French army reorganization had overtaken her own, and before the French had found allies to make up for their numerical inferiority. But it was also necessary that the French should be, or should appear to be, the aggressors; for this alone would rally to Prussia the South German States and complete the unity of Germany. It was this condition, more than anything else, that postponed the crisis for four years. The year 1866 closed therefore very uneasily for France. All the foundations of Europe had been left out of joint by the Austrian defeat and the Peace of Prague. Napoleon indeed published a document known as the "September Circular" in which he tried to show that Prussian aggrandizement was beneficial to

<sup>1</sup> Germany had four children born to every one in France.

France; but as he hinted at compensations in Belgium and urged the need for army reform, he betrayed both dissatisfaction and alarm in the very document which was intended to scout the idea of both.

Undeterred by his earlier rebuff, he was now intent on the annexation of Belgium and Luxemburg, and his immediate attention was soon concentrated on the latter. Luxemburg was ruled by the King of the Netherlands and formed part of the German Confederation. The strong fortress of Luxemburg, however, was garrisoned by Prussian troops. Napoleon's suggestion was that the King-Grand-Duke should demand the withdrawal of this garrison and then sell the Duchy—fortress and all—to France. The King-Grand-Duke agreed on condition that Prussia raised no objections. But in face of German public opinion Prussia was obliged to object. Whereupon the King-Grand-Duke drew back, and war was only averted by the intervention of the Powers on the initiative of Russia. They agreed (31 May, 1867, at London) to guarantee the neutrality of Luxemburg and the razing of the fortress. Thus the policy of using diplomacy as a means of securing compensation had twice failed within six months, and had nearly involved France in that war with Prussia which she hoped, if she could not avoid it, at any rate to postpone.

The year 1867 opened for France in an orgy of tragic contrasts. The ostensible splendour of the Empire was at its height, and culminated in the great International Exhibition to which the sovereigns of Europe flocked; even that great carnival was rudely marred by an attempt on the life of the Czar by a Pole during the former's visit to the Exhibition. At the same time came the news of the execution of the unfortunate Emperor Maximilian, and the end in tragic disaster of the chimerical and over-weening scheme upon which Napoleon had so lightly embarked in Central America. It made a great impression in Europe. In every direction, as Napoleon himself avowed in a speech delivered at Lille, black spots were creeping up on the horizon. More and more it was necessary that the Empire should redeem its

popularity by the attainment of some territorial concession in Europe.

Not the least alarming of these spots was that which arose in the direction of Italy. There Napoleon III—not so much by his own fault as by the perversity of political conditions—was once more pursuing an impossible policy. In December, 1866, in accordance with treaty obligations, the last of the French troops had evacuated the Papal States, but in deference to the outcry of the Catholics, when Garibaldi invaded the States, French troops were sent to Rome. Thus, for fear of betraying the Pope, still more for fear of offending Catholic opinion, Napoleon was led into a betrayal of the Italian Revolution of which he had throughout his reign been the sponsor. For a moment there were four armies in the Papal States—those of the Pope, of Victor Emmanuel, of Garibaldi, and of France; and there was great danger of a collision between the old allies—Italy and France. But on 3 November Garibaldi was decisively defeated at Mentana by a Franco-Papal army, after which Napoleon, almost alarmed at his victory, hurriedly withdrew the French force, although Rouher continued vehemently to protest that the Italians would never be suffered to take Rome. At home the effect of Mentana was definitely to alienate all Republicans; abroad it threatened to alienate the last of France's allies, Italy. This made it all the more necessary to press forward military and administrative reforms; and in the winter of 1867-8 Napoleon produced his solution of the army problem and, at the same time, made further modifications of his absolutism by liberating the Press and sanctioning public meetings.

Comment on the Military Law of January, 1868, will be more appropriately engaged in when a comparison is made of the military strength of France and Prussia at the moment of the outbreak of the Franco-German War. It will suffice to say here that it was an attempt to revise the short-service-system of 1832, which Napoleon had inherited; that it was theoretically sound, but that Marshal Niel, who was responsible for it, was sadly hampered by the opposition of the

politicians and the reprehensible slackness of public opinion ; that Niel died in August, 1869, and that Lebœuf who succeeded him was unequal to the carrying on of his task. The reform was to a great extent a dead letter, for it not only did not institute universal service, but, falling between two stools, sacrificed the advantages attendant on long service.

At the same time the exceptional restrictions on the Press were removed, the newspapers being simply placed under common law, while a law giving liberty for public meetings, though under numerous restrictions, was passed on 26 March, 1868. These reforms were sops to Cerberus, although they were congenial also to the Emperor, whose liberalism was quite genuine. More and more he was leaning for support on the Liberal or Third party to preserve him from the attacks of Republicans and Socialists which, encouraged by the new freedom of Press and public meetings, were becoming more and more alarming. During the whole of 1868 the Empire was vigorously attacked. Anti-religious doctrine was rife, and side-by-side with it extreme Radical-Socialist and Republican doctrines. Rochefort began the publication of "*La Lanterne*," Léon Gambetta began to take his place in public life. The Emperor himself was aging rapidly, and in 1869 was dangerously ill. Many of the old pillars of the Empire, Walewski, Troplong, Moustier, were quitting the stage ; labour was captured by the demagogues. The first great undermining of the Napoleonic legend began, and the works of Lanfrey and of Erckmann and Chatrian subjected the first Napoleon to bitter criticism. Under these conditions the Empire seemed to be crumbling to its fall, and the elections of 1869 were anticipated with alarm. The Empire was saved by the loyalty of the rural electors ; the Government majority, though sensibly, was not seriously reduced,<sup>1</sup> but the Radical party for the first time took its place in political life. The Third party now stepped in and, on 28 June, 1869, supported by the Radicals, carried a motion for a responsible ministry and a recognition of the rights of the *Corps Législatif*. In

<sup>1</sup> Government . . . . 4,438,000  
Opposition . . . . 3,355,000

response the Emperor offered his final instalment of liberal reform (12 July, 1869), according to the Chamber the right to make its own rules and appointments, extending the right of amendment, providing for the discussion of the budget clause by clause, submitting tariff changes to the decision of the Chamber, extending the right of interpellation, and according to deputies the right to be ministers. Then he prorogued the Assembly and for six months longer Rouher continued to be his chief adviser. He was governing in the teeth of a coalition majority in the Chamber.

On the reassembling of the *Corps Législatif* (29 November) the Liberal Third party insisted on its rights and, Rouher having resigned, Ollivier accepted office (2 January, 1870) with Daru as Foreign Minister and Lebœuf at the War Office.<sup>1</sup> The new ministry stood for the maintenance of the Empire on strictly liberal lines, for order without reaction, above all for peace, for the moment was past in their opinion for the curbing of Prussia.

The period of the ministry of Ollivier was a fateful one for France. It falls into two divisions; the first from its installation (2 January) to the resignation of Daru (April) and the plebiscite (8 May) when it was reconstructed; the second from the reconstruction to its fall. The first period was one of ministerial responsibility; in the second the personal influence of the Emperor was revived by the plebiscite. During the first period the search for allies and the preparations for war with Prussia were thwarted by the peace policy of the ministry, during the second, when it was too late, they

<sup>1</sup> Ollivier's was a coalition ministry. It included four members of the right-centre; four members of the left-centre; three former ministers from the retiring ministry.

Ollivier—*Garde des Sceaux*.

Daru—Foreign Office.

Lebœuf—Army.

Regnault—Navy.

Ségris—Education.

Louvet—Commerce.

Talhouët—Public Works.

Chevandier de Valdrôme—Interior.

were renewed. Ollivier made the fatal mistake of not realizing that the die was already cast—had been cast in 1866—that war with Prussia was inevitable, and that France's only safety lay in pressing on her warlike preparations, in securing the alliance of Austria and Italy, and in a careful diplomacy which should thrust the responsibility for the declaration of war on her opponents. In all these matters he failed, and failed with deplorable results to France. In face of these fatal blunders the internal policy of the new Government is comparatively unimportant.

Believing profoundly in the possibility of peace and the preservation of the Empire on liberal lines, the minister appealed to all parties for support. It was not a time when any help, from whatever quarter, could be disdained. It has been described as a "period of ghosts," and long-forgotten figures began to flit about the Tuileries: Guizot, Odilon Barrot and Duvergier de Hauranne returned to semi-public life. An amnesty was even extended to Ledru-Rollin. Public opinion was sensibly impressed by these large conciliatory proceedings; it was equally impressed by Ollivier's observance of his promise of liberal measures. The first steps were a further liberation of the Press, a guarantee of the independence of judicial bodies and the promise of the repeal of the law of *sûreté générale* (of 1858). At the same time three great committees were appointed to investigate respectively the best means of administering the city of Paris, the best means of extending communal and municipal government, and the best means of developing higher education.

It was highly unfortunate that, in the midst of all this reconciliation, the set against the Bonapartes should have received encouragement from the reckless behaviour of a prince of that house. This was Pierre Bonaparte, a son of Lucien (and first cousin once removed to the Emperor)<sup>1</sup> He was an elderly adventurer with a highly questionable past, who was scarcely recognized by the Emperor, save as a disreputable relation. This man challenged Henri Rochefort to a duel and, in a brawl, the origin and true particulars

<sup>1</sup> See Genealogical table, p. 109.

of which are obscure, killed Rochefort's representative—Victor Noir. Pierre Bonaparte was eventually acquitted by the High Court (11 January, 1870), but this strange and unfortunate incident was of course used as a lever against the Empire by the Republican irreconcilables and was a hindrance to the restorative Ollivier policy. At the same time the extreme Catholic party (the ultramontanes, headed by Veillot and Monsignor Pie, as opposed to the more moderate Catholics who followed Montalèmbert and Dupanloup) by their provocative policy widened that breach between Catholics and Liberals which had always proved so insurmountable an obstacle to the Emperor. The remarkable political odyssey of Pius IX had raised him almost to the position of a living martyr in the eyes of the devout Catholic world; a perfect cult of the Pope had grown up, and there was a readiness among the ultramontanes to try and compensate the unfortunate pontiff for his temporal losses by some spiritual aggrandizement.<sup>1</sup> When, therefore, an Œcumenical Council, which the Pope had long prepared for, was called in December, 1869, the opportunity was seized by the ultramontanes. The Council concerned itself with three main questions, the conversion into doctrine of the Syllabus of 1864, in which the Pope had uttered his protest against Liberalism and declared war on modern society; the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin; and finally, and most important of all, the definition of the dogma of Papal Infallibility. The French Government, guided by Ollivier, abstained from all interference; but the triumph of ultramontanism in the Council which was consummated on 18 July, 1870, when the doctrine of Papal Infallibility was proclaimed in St. Peter's, added considerably to the difficulties of Ollivier's ministry.

While all this was going on before the public eye, Napoleon, who was fully alive to the dangers of his position, had never ceased to negotiate on his own account for the alliances which were essential to the safety of the country.

<sup>1</sup> The extension of free-thought and of anti-religious tendencies had also stiffened Catholicism and encouraged the idea of some spiritual *coup*.



War was in his opinion inevitable; it was even necessary for the prestige and the very life of his dynasty. But war without allies would almost certainly be disastrous, and allies were hard to win. He continued to press his advances on Austria and, in the early days of 1870, the Archduke Albrecht visited Paris and discussed a plan of campaign based on the assumption that Austria would make common cause with France. Daru at once objected to these personal negotiations; they were an offence to a ministry which stood for ministerial responsibility and peace. No negotiations, he said, were permissible save such as were both pacific and official. So the all-important alliance was ostensibly abandoned. The Emperor did not dismiss his ministry, but in April he was able to make a fresh appeal to the people and to secure a renewal of authority for his personal policy. In March Ollivier had promised measures of constitutional reform, and on 20 April the Senate was converted into a regular Upper House with a share in legislation. By law the electors had to be consulted on any proposal for an alteration of the Constitution, and Napoleon, inspired by Rouher, availed himself of the opportunity of seeking a new popular sanction for the Empire. On 23 April the constitutional changes were submitted to a plebiscite; at the same time the judgment of the people was tacitly invited on the Empire itself. Once more Napoleon III triumphed, this time in a pitched battle with the forces of Republicanism; 7,358,786 voted *placet*; 1,571,939 *non-placet*; 1,894,681 abstained, and there were 113,978 spoiled papers.

The ministry was reconstructed with de Gramont at the Foreign Office in place of Daru, who had resigned in April, and Plichon at the Ministry of Public Works. The victory was less for the Government than for the Emperor; and Napoleon III had now a Foreign Minister who was a thorough Prusso-phobe and who had been for years French Ambassador to Vienna; he at once reopened negotiations for an Austrian alliance. Lebrun was sent to Vienna and came to a (still unofficial) understanding with the Archduke that, in the event of war between France and Prussia, Austria

would take the field three weeks after France. The Government and the Empire seemed to be at the end of their troubles ; internally they were triumphant, externally Ollivier declared (30 June) there was not a cloud in the sky. It was at this moment that the storm burst that swept away both throne and ministry and left only the stricken framework of a nation. To understand how this unexpected catastrophe occurred it is necessary once more to concentrate attention on foreign politics.

We know that since 1866 Napoleon and his immediate circle had realized the Prussian danger, and had been alive to the need for alliance and army reorganization. We have seen how, in the attempt to secure the former, he had been hampered by the pacific policy of Ollivier's ministry. But even without that obstacle there were grave difficulties in the way of the Triple Alliance between France, Austria, and Italy for which Napoleon was working. Austria indeed was inclined to look with favour on the idea, but only if she were guaranteed against a hostile Italy in her rear. And Italy was a more difficult subject. She was indeed ready to sell her friendship for a price ; but that price was one which the Emperor could not pay. Her demand was for nothing less than Rome as capital ; and, in his need for Catholic support against the forces of Republicanism, this was more than Napoleon thought himself able to grant. Once more he was in his old dilemma and this time it had ruinous consequences. Under these conditions an alliance between France and Italy was hopeless ; and the failure to gain Italy doubled the difficulty of gaining Austria. There was indeed, as we have seen, a verbal understanding between the Courts of Paris and Vienna, which was more dangerous than none ; it lured Napoleon into war with the conviction that support would be forthcoming from Austria ; and the support never came.

And if she failed in her search for allies, France failed even more disastrously in her attempt to build up an army equal to that which was gradually nearing completion in Prussia. The Prussian Army for active service had been limited after Jena by the dictation of Napoleon I to 42,000

men.<sup>1</sup> By a curious nemesis this drove the Prussians to that short-service system which was destined to ruin France in 1870. The small yearly contingent (40,000 after 1815) was passed rapidly through the field army, spending three years with the colours, two years with the reserves, and seven years in each *ban* of the Landwehr, a kind of militia, the first *ban* of which was immediately available for field service in time of war, while the second *ban*<sup>2</sup> was available for garrison duty. When this organization was in full swing it gave a total of 520,000 for active service in time of war.

The campaigns of 1850 and 1859 revealed certain weaknesses in this system, and between 1860 and 1866 the Prussian Army was consequently remodelled ; the annual contingent was raised to 63,000, who spent three years with the colours, four in the reserve, and five in the first *ban* of the Landwehr ; the total thus arrived at was between 780,000 and 830,000 men, of whom five-ninths were with the colours and four-ninths reserves. But, as the completion of the new organization required a period of twelve years, the army had not attained its full total in 1870.

Service in Prussia was compulsory and universal. It was quite otherwise in France. There military service was nominally voluntary ; but in point of fact volunteers fell far short of the necessary number, and the vacancies were filled by ballot. So that the system was equivalent to a modified conscription ; it lacked therefore both the strength of voluntary service and the advantage of universal compulsory service, while it suffered from the disadvantages of both. The system was further weakened by the excessive quantity of furloughs and the creation, from motives of economy, of a second class in the annual contingent, which received no training and became a sort of untrained reserve. The expedient of *remplacement*, by which a conscript could pay a sub-

<sup>1</sup> *Supra*, p. 125.

<sup>2</sup> The second *ban* of the Landwehr was abolished, and every one between seventeen and forty-two who was not either in the Regular Army or the Landwehr was enrolled in the Landsturm and liable to be called on for military service.

stitute and was held responsible for his behaviour, was probably less injurious from the fact that it brought a lower class of recruits than from the moral degradation attendant on such a system.<sup>1</sup> By a law of 1855 an arrangement called *exonération* was introduced, by which a conscript could escape on making a payment to the Exchequer, the fund so created being used to provide premiums for soldiers re-engaging after their normal term. In 1867 there were 56,000 such *réengagés*.

In 1866 the condition of affairs was this, that service in the army was looked down upon and there was a general desire to escape from it; that the recruits were drawn from the lowest classes; that a considerable number of men lacked training; that there was a noticeable dearth of good non-commissioned officers, and that a number of the *réengagés* were beyond the best age for active service. When, in 1866, after Königgrätz, Napoleon's eyes were opened to the military strength of Prussia, it was decided that the French army must be increased and reorganized. The Government, however, was too weak to dream of imposing universal service; the very name, connected as it was with the idea of conquest, was unpopular in France, whereas in Germany it was connected with the idea of nationality and liberation; and not only was the idea unpopular but the politicians threw obstacles in the way of army reform and the state of the Exchequer was a cogent plea for economy; thus the reorganization after 1866 fell far short of the expert recommendations.

The scheme which is connected with the name of Marshal Niel was as follows: exoneration was abolished and a return was made to the conditions of 1832, the *remplacé* once more becoming responsible for his substitute. A *garde mobile* was created, designed in the first instance for garrison work, internal defence, and general support, but available in case of need for field service. For this guard there was an annual contingent of between 75,000 and 110,000 (i.e. after five years, say, 375,000); they were liable for an annual training of fifteen days. But the *garde mobile* never really came into

<sup>1</sup> In 1869, of 75,000 men, there were 42,000 substitutes.

active existence ; Niel died in August, 1869, and his successor, Lebœuf—a much weaker man—simply dropped that part of the scheme. Even if it had actually come into existence the *garde mobile*, an amateur force, could never have been weighed against the Prussian Landwehr, a body of seasoned soldiers all of whom passed through the regular army.<sup>1</sup> As it was in 1870 there was no *garde mobile*, and France had to trust to her field army alone. This field army, by the new organization, was formed from an annual contingent of 76,000 of whom 63,000 (including most of the substitutes) served five years with the colours and four with the reserve, while the remaining 13,000 served for five months, not consecutively, but were at the disposal of the War Minister when required. When complete this system provided a regular army of 415,000 men either with the colours or liable to be called up. After the five years with the colours, these men passed for four years into the reserve ; this gave a reserve of about 210,000 men or a grand total of 625,000 on paper. In actual fact, there were only 567,000 available in 1870, and of these only 336,000 for field work, and, owing to the failure of the mobilization, even that figure was not attained.

<sup>1</sup> But of course any recognized organization, however incomplete, would have been useful in the second phase of the war, after the French field armies had ceased to exist.

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## CHAPTER XXXIX

### THE FRANCO-PRUSSIAN WAR

FROM this sketch of the military conditions of the two nations who were now to appeal to the arbitrament of arms, it is apparent that France was faced with alarming odds. Nor can it be urged that she was ignorant of what was going on beyond the Rhine. Many of her leading officers—Bazaine and Ducrot for instance—had visited Germany and were fully aware of the increasing military strength of Prussia. Above all Colonel Stoffel, the French military attaché at Berlin, sent the most alarming reports to Paris. How was it that the French government and nation did not share the alarm? The first answer to this question is that France was passing through a phase of sentimental pacificism. The aversion to military service penetrated all grades of society, and bred the idea that war was an outrage and the army a survival of barbarism unsuited to the enlightened commercial and industrial state that Napoleon III had built up. The consequence was that not only did the army not take itself seriously, reflecting as it did the indolence, luxury, and sentimentalism of the nation, but that the nation did not take either the army or the possibility of war seriously. There was also the belief—unfounded as it turned out—that France would secure alliances, and would derive from them a security which she could not get from her own arms alone. Prussia, it was thought, would hesitate to attack a Triple Alliance of France, Austria, and Italy; though as a matter of fact Moltke's calculations told him that Prussia could confront France with equanimity even if she had this support. More dangerous and even more unfounded was the confidence that Prussian soldiers and, above all, Prussian generals were no match for their French oppo-

nents. Here there came in a great deal of the arrogance of ignorance. Because the Prussian was painstaking, methodical, and studious, he was written down as a lumbering and uninspired machine. France had a monopoly of the fighting qualities; and by their aid she would triumph. Then there was the fear of imposing further burdens on the people. It was an era of retrenchment run mad. When Niel asked for fourteen millions for the *Garde Mobile* he got five. Amidst all the ostentatious splendours of the Court and the Exhibition of 1869 the one expenditure which might have saved the country was cut down to figures which were ludicrous in their inadequacy; and while the French ministers were thus painfully extracting insufficient sums, Bismarck was able to thrust the whole army scheme of Roon down the unwilling throats of the Germans at one gulp by the simple expedient of suspending the constitution. Above all there was the refusal of the nation to face the situation, or to learn unpleasant truths. The unpleasant, in fact, soon came to seem the impossible. Stoffel was written down as a troublesome Prussophobe, and France entered on the terrible crisis of 1870 secure in the belief that war would not occur, because she did not want it to occur.

For all these reasons France remained blind to the gravity of the situation. It was far otherwise with Prussia; there it was realized in the spring of 1870 that the moment had come when war might be undertaken with the highest degree of certainty, while France had neither allies nor adequate resources.<sup>1</sup> Bismarck, Roon the Minister for War, and Moltke the Chief of the General Staff, all thoroughly realized this: schooled in the tradition of Frederick the Great and Clausewitz they had no scruples about forcing a war on France; their only reason for hesitation was the difficulty of finding such a

<sup>1</sup> The new Prussian army scheme would not be complete until 1872; but it was *much nearer completion* than that of France, and near enough to give a great superiority. The attitude of the South German States also impelled Bismarck towards an early war with France. These States were drifting away from Prussia, and the best, if not the only, way to unite Germany was to provoke France to an act of aggression.



*casus belli* as would cause France to appear the aggressor against Germany, and so enable them to secure the co-operation of the South German States. Not only was this desirable from military considerations but it was the best way of accomplishing the final union of Germany under Prussia.<sup>1</sup> The Prussian statesmen then had a double object, firstly to force on a war at the earliest possible moment, and secondly to throw the onus of aggression upon France.

In June Ollivier had declared that the European outlook was thoroughly peaceful. Hardly were the words out of his mouth when the whole situation was suddenly and without the slightest warning changed by the announcement on 3 July that the throne of Spain, vacant since the Revolution of September, 1868, had been offered to and, after three refusals, accepted by, Prince Leopold of Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen,<sup>2</sup> a member of a cadet branch of the Prussian Royal House. Prince Leopold's territory was in Swabia and he was not regarded as a Prussian royalty; he was also bound by the ties of blood to the Bonapartes; nevertheless his candidature was accepted in France as an insult, and French public opinion was violently roused. Historians have been divided in allocating the responsibility for this provocative incident. Was it a purely independent step on the part of Leopold, or was it encouraged by King William as head of the Hohenzollerns, and apart from his position as King of Prussia, or was it again a sinister design worked out by Bismarck in order to provoke France into a declaration of war at the moment most favourable to Prussia? Lord Acton, at any rate, whose opinion on such subjects is always worth listening to, thought there were grounds for believing that the candidature was Bismarck's work.<sup>3</sup> If it was a deliberate provoca-

<sup>1</sup> Bavaria and Württemberg were not Prussophil, and there was considerable tension between them and the North-German Confederation.

<sup>2</sup> Prince Leopold accepted the crown of Spain on 30 June.

<sup>3</sup> Acton, "Historical Essays" (1907), p. 214. When Bismarck learnt France was working for a Triple Alliance he sent Bernhardt on a special mission to Spain, and Prussian money went to Spain in 1870 to bribe the Spanish Cortes into offering the crown to Leopold. Acton believed that it was Bernhardt "who brought the Germans to Paris".

tion to France it was highly successful. De Gramont, in answer to a question in the chamber, denounced "the disarrangement, to the detriment of France, of the equilibrium in Europe by the placing by a foreign power of one of its princes on the throne of Charles V". "We don't think this will happen," he continued, "but, if it does, secure of your support, we shall know how to accomplish our duty without hesitation or feebleness." This declaration, which M. Ollivier has declared to be "irreproachable," certainly did not err on the side of moderation. At the same time de Gramont dispatched a somewhat gruff protest to the Prussian court, in reply to which he was informed that the Prussian government knew nothing of the matter—as officially they did not. In spite of this disavowal a special ambassador (Benedetti) was hurried off to Ems, where King William was staying, with instructions to insist that the King must order Prince Leopold to withdraw his candidature. De Gramont was in fact so roused that he required not only the withdrawal of the candidature but the humiliation of Prussia. It was by carrying this game too far that he played into Bismarck's hands.

The abandonment by Prince Leopold of his candidature was a real triumph for French diplomacy, and if de Gramont had been content with this victory all would have been well and Bismarck's sinister designs would have failed.<sup>1</sup> But de Gramont was not content, and, without consulting his colleagues, instructed Benedetti to demand that the King of Prussia should associate himself with the abandonment and should give a guarantee that the candidature would not be revived. This was a deliberate and insane provocation. King William with some heat declined to consider the proposal, and politely refused to discuss the matter further with Benedetti.

Thus matters had already been brought to the verge of war by the provocative behaviour of de Gramont before they passed, as they now did, out of the kindly hands of King William into the grasp of his stern and unscrupulous minister. Bismarck, Roon, and Moltke were dining together at Berlin, when

<sup>1</sup> It was described by Guizot as the most splendid diplomatic victory he had ever seen, and by Thiers as almost a counterbalance to Königgrätz.

a dispatch was received from Ems, informing Bismarck of what had passed and leaving it to him to decide whether the news should be communicated to the ambassadors and the Press. The meal was suspended; all three statesmen were aghast, not at the gravity of the news but at the failure of the King to respond to the foolhardy provocation of de Gramont. Then Bismarck turned to Moltke and asked him the significant question: "if war became suddenly imminent, how long would you need to complete your preparations?" Moltke answered that there was no object in postponing the outbreak, and that he could at any rate mobilize quicker than France. Then Bismarck turned to the Ems telegram; he had determined to avail himself of the permission to publish the news and to do so in his own way. By dint of "certain suppressions," to use his own words, he gave to the situation at Ems a much more strained appearance than was actually the case: under his editorship, in fact, the Ems telegram gave the impression that King William had insulted the French ambassador. This was the "red rag" which Bismarck "flung out to the Gallic Bull"; the same evening the Ems telegram, with Bismarck's suppressions, was communicated to the Press and to the Prussian ambassadors at the various courts. This was on 13 July; six days later the French declaration of war reached Berlin. The "Gallic Bull" had responded only too well to the "red rag": and Napoleon had been brought, by the snares of Bismarck, the insane act of presumption of his own foreign minister, and finally by the uncontrollable force of the most fiery public opinion in Europe, into the very situation which he was striving to avoid; he found himself involved in war before his preparations were complete or his alliances cemented.

Before embarking on the narrative of the campaign it is desirable to have an idea of the relative strength and chances of France and Prussia. In numbers, as we have already seen, the Prussians had, and were known to have, a considerable advantage on paper. In practice, owing to the superiority of the Prussian organization, this advantage proved even greater than had been anticipated, and may be estimated on a moderate

basis at four to three. Confronted with this fundamental discrepancy, France was not, however, without certain means of counterbalancing her numerical inferiority. There was still the chance that Austria might join her, and so detach a considerable portion of the Prussian force. There was a remote chance (soon dissipated) that South Germany might stand aloof from Prussia: There was also something to be expected from a diversion created by the French fleet—then the second in Europe—in co-operation with Denmark. Finally there was the belief, based on past experience, and on the proximity of her troops to the frontier, that France would be able to mobilize considerably quicker, and so to have the advantage of the initiative, which is the best chance of overcoming numerical odds. We shall see how one by one these hopes were dissipated, until France found herself, without allies, confronted with a united Germany, her fleet inactive, deprived by the superior rapidity of her opponent of the advantage of the initiative, and obliged to stand on the defensive against overwhelming odds. To take the points one by one. Austria continued for a time to talk of entering the arena: her entrance, however, depended on the inclusion of Italy in the alliance and on the vigour of the French offensive across the Rhine. Napoleon would not, probably could not, agree to the Italian terms, and his armies never reached the Rhine. It was not, however, until after the first defeats, Spicheren and Wörth, that the chance of Austrian help altogether disappeared. As for the South German States, it was very quickly seen that Bismarck's cunning and de Gramont's folly had brought them to the side of Prussia. The diversion which the fleet might have made in the direction of Schleswig-Holstein, and with the co-operation of Denmark, was postponed so long that it never came to anything. France's last hope was in the speed of her mobilization, in her leadership, and in the fighting qualities of her troops: for her mobilization she had an excellent Eastern railway system; her military centre, Châlons, was very near the theatre of war, and she had a large proportion of her artillery and military stores there. She might therefore reasonably expect to have an advantage over the Prussians in

speed of mobilization which would to a great extent counter-balance her numerical inferiority. Her whole plan of campaign, political as well as military, was based on this assumption.<sup>1</sup>

So it appeared on paper. It was very different in practice. Worked on a non-territorial basis, organized on highly centralized lines, totally devoid of any serious preparation, the whole machine, when it was started, became rapidly clogged with details; the mobilization fell into the most lamentable confusion, and with the failure of the mobilization vanished every chance of securing any counter-balancing advantages against the relentless host that was gathering with smooth speed and mathematical precision on the other side of the Rhine. Alliances, South German defections, vigorous defensive, all these hopes tumbled like a pack of cards: moreover the French could not quite shake off their preconceived ideas and plans for an immediate offensive, and never really developed the offensive-defensive plan of campaign by which alone, after the failure of the mobilization, they could have hoped to meet the Prussian advance.

The question thus resolved itself into one of military skill and fighting qualities. It was only by some superiority in armament, tactics, strategy, and leadership that France could hope to escape from the net in which, a fortnight after the declaration of war, she found herself enmeshed. To take the various arms one by one: in artillery, so far from being superior, France found herself outmatched in numbers, material, and tactics. The nine-pounder gun, which was the armament of two-thirds of her batteries, had worked well in 1859, but in 1870 was utterly outclassed by the Prussian guns. Even the twelve-pounders, with which the remaining third was armed, had only a range of 3000 yards as against the 3500 of the Prussian artillery. Moreover, the time-fuses of the French were much less certain in effect than the percussion shells (bursting on impact) of the Prussians. The machine guns (*mitrailleuses*), on which the French placed

<sup>1</sup> Napoleon probably counted on a start of at least ten to fourteen days.

great reliance, were not very deadly, but had considerable moral effect. Ammunition and equipment generally was deplorably, even dangerously, short, especially at first, owing partly to the confusion of the mobilization, partly to the parsimony of recent governments. In tactics the French artillery acted in isolated units, the German in mass; and it was this opposition of mass to driblets, not in artillery alone but in all arms, that gave the Germans their chief advantage over the French. The French cavalry too was not only gravely handicapped by the inferior quality of its horses (due again to government parsimony) but was also deficient in war training. It failed entirely in horse-mastership, scouting, and reconnaissance. Much of the paralysis of the early stages of the war was due to the failure of the French cavalry to fulfil its function of feeling for the enemy. For this deficiency its reckless valour in battle was insufficient atonement. The French cavalry in 1870 was in fact only qualified to perform one, and that not the most important, of the functions of cavalry in modern war.

It was thus to her infantry alone that France could look for superiority: and the French infantry, properly led, and even badly led<sup>1</sup>—as it generally was—was fully a match for equal numbers of the Prussian; it was armed moreover with a weapon which was greatly superior to that of the Prussian—the *Chassepôt* rifle,<sup>2</sup> sighted up to nearly 2000 yards. This was a most important point: but it was somewhat discounted by the fact that the French infantry had received insufficient field training in time of peace and consequently could not use its rifle to the best advantage; also by the failure of the French tacticians to appreciate the conditions of modern warfare. Niel's army regulations (1869), which were the latest, provided for attack by battalion columns, each covered by a company (i.e. one-sixth of a

<sup>1</sup>For French infantry never depended so much on leadership as German. It would fight almost unled.

<sup>2</sup>One of the reasons why Moltke had been anxious to force on war with France in 1858 was because he was aware that the French were about to adopt this excellent weapon.

battalion) of *tirailleurs*. This method was as old as Austerlitz.<sup>1</sup> To support the *tirailleurs* the battalions deployed and reformed column to deliver the final attack. This tactical system did not provide sufficient skirmishers, and demanded a double manœuvre under fire, a thing which the modern rifle made impossible; also it depended too much on volleys: the German tactics were much more in conformity with the new conditions.<sup>2</sup> There was also a notion prevalent in the French army that with the new weapon the best tactical method was the defensive; a view unsound in itself and ruinous to the peculiar morale of the French soldier. The French infantry in fact, owing to its inexperience in the field and the vicious movements prescribed by Niel's regulations, deprived itself of a great deal of the advantage it enjoyed from the possession of a rifle superior to that of its opponents. Nor was it on the field of battle alone that the French were inferior to their antagonists. They had forgotten how to move large bodies of troops, and their order system, which left hardly anything to subordinate initiative, was quite out of date.

Thus it was that France entered upon the war firstly in a grave numerical inferiority; secondly, with only a slender chance of alliances, and one which totally vanished when it was found that she could not take the offensive east of the Rhine; thirdly, confronted with a united Germany; fourthly, without the advantage of a more rapid mobilization than that of her antagonist; fifthly (and consequently), without the power of acting on the offensive, the only course which might have compensated her for her numerical inferiority; sixthly, with all her plans made for an offensive, and yet thrown back on a defensive (which turned out to be the worst defensive possible); seventhly, obliged to fight on ground which from the political point of view was unfavourable to her, for French public opinion was as intolerant of an evacuation of Alsace as was South African public opinion of the evacuation of Dundee and Ladysmith at the outbreak of the South African

<sup>1</sup> Soult's actual tactics there.

<sup>2</sup> E.g. scattered formation, individual fire, company column.

War. If we add that her whole military system—organization, strategy, and tactics—was antiquated, and that she neither possessed nor produced a single commander capable of handling large masses of troops in a wide arena, that the Emperor (who even after he resigned the chief command was always murmuring his feeble opinions into the ears of the commanders) was in broken health and quite unfit, from that cause as well as from the very mediocre nature of his military talents, to carry on a campaign with any resolution, and that by a fatal error of judgment the command on his departure from the front was given over to Bazaine, probably quite the worst commander that ever led a great army, we are in possession of many of the facts that explain the disasters which quickly overwhelmed the French. It was perhaps in the sphere of leadership that the German superiority was most emphatic. Not only did they possess in Moltke a commander of the very first rank, but their whole system demanded intelligence, co-operation, initiative, and resolution from subordinates of all ranks, and furnished the education necessary for the realization of this ideal. The French on the other hand were not only without a capable leader, but the subordinate commanders were lamentably ignorant of the first principles of command in the field, of the sphere of subordinate initiative, and of the management of large bodies of troops. They had in fact forgotten everything that Napoleon I had taught them.

Calculating on an advantage in mobilization, the French had made plans for the crossing of the Rhine at and about Strassburg. This was considered the best chance of hardening Austrian opinion, and of preventing the union of southern with northern Germany. Both these ideas, however, were soon exploded; and even more crushing was the utter failure of the mobilization. So complete was this that, when Napoleon arrived at Metz on 28 July, the fourteenth day of the mobilization, he quickly realized (and said so to Macmahon on the 30th) that the planned offensive over the Rhine was out of the question. He therefore spread the armies widely across Alsace and Lorraine from Thionville to Strassburg to



cover French territory, still cherishing a vague hope that an offensive might ultimately be possible, but with the main idea of securing good defensive positions along the Saar, the tributary of the Moselle which cuts Lorraine in two.<sup>1</sup> Thus he waited. Meanwhile Moltke had determined to operate from the fortresses of the middle-Rhine and Main; he did not now believe in the possibility of a successful French offensive over the Rhine; but such an offensive could have been dealt with from the middle-Rhine and Main base: that base also provided a splendid series of strong places, under cover of which preparations could be made for the thrust towards Paris which was the underlying idea in the Prussian plan of campaign. The German mobilization, swift as it was, was not completed until 4 August, and the days between 28 July and 4 August were completely wasted by the French, who might have utilized them for a vigorous offensive. But, instead of probing forward with their cavalry to ascertain the true state of affairs, they contented themselves with the wholesale absorption of lying rumours and a half-hearted reconnaissance-in-force towards Saarbruck on 2 August, which left them with the false impression that the German mobilization was not very well advanced. This was far from being the case: it was almost complete: the advanced corps had been moving for days and on 4 August the armies began to move. The first, under Steinmetz, was concentrating at Wadern (near the junction of Saar and Moselle), and threatening the French left; the second under Prince Frederick Charles was on the Rhine, while the third under the Crown Prince was advancing from Speyer up the Rhine against Macmahon. The general idea was a movement on interior lines against Macmahon, to be followed by a sort of right wheel, of which Steinmetz would be the pivot.

Macmahon lay behind the Lauter and on 5 August Abel

<sup>1</sup> He had about 200,000 men in line by this time of whom 130,000 were in Lorraine, the remainder (under Macmahon) in Alsace holding the lines of the Lauter and the Rhine, and in touch with the Lorraine army across the Vosges mountains in the neighbourhood of Bitche.

Douay, who was in an isolated position at Weissemburg, was surprised by an overwhelmingly superior body of Germans and, cut off from his supports, suffered a severe defeat, in which, however, the French infantry greatly distinguished themselves against odds of five to one and very superior artillery. The French lost 25 per cent of the force engaged and Douay was killed.<sup>1</sup> Weissemburg was typical of all the 1870 fighting: the French were surprised because their cavalry was useless for reconnaissance; they were caught hanging on to a detached position: their commanders showed no power of co-operation; the Prussians just the reverse: the French artillery was out-classed, while the infantry gave an excellent account of itself. Time after time these characteristics were to repeat themselves. Macmahon withdrew from the Lauter after Weissemburg and took up a strong defensive position behind the next tributary of the Rhine—the Sauer.

Macmahon did not yet fully realize the odds (nearly three to one; 125,000 to 45,000) against which he had to fight, but he telegraphed for reinforcements, and Faily's corps (the nearest west of the Vosges) was directed to cross the mountains and go to his assistance. This, through lack of resolution, Faily failed to do, with the result that on 6 August Macmahon was caught at Wörth by greatly superior numbers (95,000 to 42,000) and totally defeated, with a loss of 20,000 men, though only after a magnificent resistance. The Prussians, who had not made a very brilliant business of the battle considering their immense numerical superiority, did not pursue, and Macmahon's routed force made its way along the Vosges to Saverne, while the defaulting Faily followed suit on the western side of the mountains; eventually Macmahon and Faily joined forces at Saareburg, and thus Alsace was evacuated. Their combined forces (about 50,000 men) made for Châlons, for reorganization. The Prussians, whose cavalry displayed little energy in pursuit, quite failed to hustle their defeated enemy, and Macmahon got clean

<sup>1</sup> 5000 to 25,000 says M. Émile Ollivier ("L'Empire libéral," op. cit. iv. 27); and he gives the German losses as 91 officers and 1960 men, the French as 60 officers and 1100 men.

away ; but he committed a grave blunder in not blowing up the railway tunnels of the Vosges.

Meanwhile the second Prussian army under Prince Frederick Charles, in order to perform its allotted functions, was confronted with the dangerous task of pushing through the Hardt mountains where it might be caught on the march if the French were to take the offensive.<sup>1</sup> Steinmetz on the right had instructions to fall on the French flank if they attempted such a movement. On 6 August this general, who was rash to the point of insubordination, and was moreover on this occasion committed by the over-haste of his leading troops, attacked Frossard, who was posted at Forbach and Spicheren in the elbow of the Saare above Saarbrücken. Frossard had no clear instructions, and simply allowed himself to be drawn into this engagement. Steinmetz' rash action gave the French a real chance of dealing with the Prussian corps in detail : but Frossard, who was no more than an engineer, did not conduct the battle with any ability, and Napoleon, who was within an hour (by rail) of the battle-field, merely displayed a mild curiosity, and made no attempt to go to the scene of action. Even without support Frossard, whose numbers were quite equal to those of his opponent, should have been able to score a success, but he handled his troops without vigour, and the Prussians, who lost rather more than the French,<sup>2</sup> were left masters of the field, thanks mainly to the fine tactics of Alvensleben, commander of the Third Corps of the Second Army. Spicheren was a more terrible revelation than anything that had gone before. It displayed the weakness of the French training and the French leadership ; the lack of *esprit de corps* and of that instinct of co-operation in which the Germans were so strong. It also laid bare Napoleon's helpless incapacity for leadership.<sup>3</sup> There had been a real opportunity for crushing

<sup>1</sup> The passage of the Hardt Mountains was a very daring feat. The troops were obliged to move in long columns, two army corps on one road.

<sup>2</sup> Germans, 4871 ; French, 4078.

<sup>3</sup> M. Émile Ollivier in his most recent (and unfortunately his last) volume endeavoured to clear Bazaine from the often-repeated charge

40,000 Prussians, had the French been resolutely led. Such a victory would have put the Prussians in a serious predicament, would have counter-balanced the moral effect of Wörth, and given the French time to reorganize their plans. No doubt Moltke would have risen to the occasion, no doubt also Napoleon and Bazaine would have failed to do so. It is interesting, though of course beside the point, to reflect what would have happened could the leaders of 1814 have been present on either side in place of the leaders of 1870 ; if Schwarzenberg had been in Moltke's place, Blücher in that of Steinmetz, the corps-leaders of 1814 in the places of the actual corps-leaders ; above all Napoleon I in the place of Napoleon III. The Germans would have been flung back to the Rhine after a costly retreat through the Hardt Mountains and their numerical superiority would have vanished.

There followed a period of irresolution at the French head-quarters. Four totally different plans were discussed between 6 and 9 August, only to be given up. One was to withdraw as far as Châlons ; another to move south and threaten the German flank from Nancy and Langres. But nerves at Paris are notoriously excitable, and public opinion there demanded a battle on the Moselle. Napoleon, who could not afford to ignore public opinion, therefore decided to concentrate at Metz. This decision was not without its dangers, the chief of which was that of the right flank being turned and the whole army being driven against the Belgian frontier. This was what actually happened in August at Sedan, and the idea was always present to Moltke. A bolder and sounder course for Napoleon would have been to leave Metz, withdraw southward towards Nancy and Lunéville, and manœuvre against the flank of the German armies, basing himself on the south and centre of France. This is no doubt what the French would do now if similarly situated, but the exigencies of the political situation decided Napoleon on the other course.

Had the Emperor acted with vigour he should have had that he failed to go to Frossard's assistance as early as he might have done.

no difficulty in concentrating at least 200,000 men on the Moselle, and in giving a good account of himself in that strong position. But he acted half-heartedly and was half-heartedly obeyed. Faily and Macmahon for instance had, as we know, disobeyed their instructions to make for Metz by way of Nancy, and had marched by Lunéville on Châlons instead. Napoleon it was now clear to all observers was no longer fit for the supreme command. On 9 August he handed over the second, third, and fourth corps to Bazaine and on 12 August placed that Marshal in supreme command. No worse appointment could possibly have been made. Bazaine was ignorant, inexperienced, selfish, disloyal, and lazy; and, so far from being an improvement on Napoleon, allowed matters to drift even more helplessly than the Emperor had, and with less excuse. It is difficult even to understand what his intentions were. At first there seems to have been an idea of a stand on the French Nied in front of the Moselle. Then, after the waste of six priceless days, the idea of falling back to Châlons seems to have come uppermost only to disappear again. Bazaine was in fact a military Micawber, but with such an enemy as Moltke it ought not to have been difficult to guess what would "turn up". By this time the French were almost within the Prussian vice, and speed was all important: but, incredible as it seems, even at this critical juncture Bazaine wasted eighteen hours without making a move. Then (14 August) he began an ill-conceived and confused crossing of the Moselle: the troops were piled up on two only of the many bridges, got jammed in the town of Metz, and blocked the road beyond for miles, with the result that the army only made  $9\frac{1}{2}$  miles by the evening of the 15th. On the same day the Germans involved themselves somewhat rashly in an action at Borney<sup>1</sup> against the French rear-guard east of the river, and might have suffered a nasty set-back had Bazaine bestirred himself. Even as it was Moltke's advance was delayed by his uncertainty as to whether Bazaine intended to attack him east of Metz.

<sup>1</sup> The fight at Borney (or Colombey) cost the Germans about 5000, the French about 3600 men, out of about 100,000 men engaged.

In spite of the slack and half-hearted nature of the French retreat the general belief in the Prussian head-quarters was that they would be able to make it good. Prince Frederick Charles crossed the Moselle higher up, at Novéant and Pont à Mousson, and directed his leading troops to sweep northwards and westwards, in order to hustle the French retreat along the Verdun road, but not with much hope of preventing it. Alvensleben, the spirited commander of the third corps, had more correctly judged the situation, and had pushed on, on his own initiative until stopped by orders from Prince Frederick Charles. Fresh orders from Moltke enabled him to continue his advance northwards, while the bulk of the army pushed westwards under the erroneous impression that the French had made good their retreat. At daybreak, on the 16th, Alvensleben advanced towards Mars-la-Tour. The French were bivouacked along the Metz-Verdun road from Gravelotte to Vionville; and, owing to their failure either to occupy or to reconnoitre the wooded plateau which sloped up to their position from the south, they were completely taken by surprise by the attack of the German horse artillery. By the time Alvensleben's infantry came up, however, the second French corps was deployed along the Metz-Verdun road, and were supported north of the road by one division of the sixth corps (Canrobert's). At first the German infantry had all the worst of it, and was only able to hold its ground by the splendid work of the artillery. At 10.45 supports came up and Frossard's corps, which had held the centre of the French position, fell back towards Rézonville in disorder, leaving Flavigny and Vionville in the hands of the Prussians. The bulk of the French second corps, which had suffered severely, fell back on Gravelotte; it had lost 25 per cent of its infantry in from two to three hours' fighting. Nevertheless the Prussians, who had suffered even more severely, were by this time at a standstill. Alvensleben had no reserves, and his left was threatened by the approach of fresh French troops from Saint-Marcel. At the same time he was too deeply committed to break off the action: outnumbered by four to one, he was doomed to victory or annihilation. A

vigorous French initiative at this juncture would have secured his destruction.

The baleful influence of the French commander-in-chief now began to make itself felt, and saved the Prussians from a situation which was well-nigh desperate. Bazaine seems never fully to have made up his mind to press the retreat on Verdun and Nancy; in fact he was in his usual state of indecision, and was by this time under the influence of the magnetic attraction of the strong fortress of Metz. Instead, therefore, of pressing the success on his right and rolling the Germans up in that quarter, as he could easily have done, he got into a state of alarm about his left, and his sole activity during the entire day was devoted to the useless piling up of troops in the neighbourhood of Gravelotte to prevent an irruption of the Germans in that quarter and the consequent severing of his connexion with Metz. It was this fatuous action which ruined the French chances of victory when they were in reality quite favourable.

Alvensleben had been so severely handled that by midday he found himself practically demobilized and was unable to follow up the retreat of Frossard's infantry. Now was the moment for the French to bring up fresh troops on the German left and centre and to deliver a strong counter attack. But Bazaine contented himself with arranging a fresh line of defence on the Rézonville plateau. Bazaine's supineness enabled Alvensleben to cling to his position during the whole of the afternoon, thanks mainly to the admirable work of his artillery. But the German left was several times on the brink of destruction. Between 1.30 and 2 p.m. a division of the sixth corps threatened Vionville, and the situation was only saved by a charge of Bredow's cavalry. Between 2.30 and 4 p.m. the fourth corps, under Ladmirault, who was without orders from Bazaine, turned the Prussian left and rendered the position desperate. This time the situation was saved by the arrival of the leading columns of Voigts Rhetz's (tenth) corps which had marched to the guns. This caused Ladmirault to withdraw. As the tenth corps gradually came on to the field a counter-attack on the French

right was ordered, but failure to reconnoitre led to the misdirection of this attack, and Schwarzkoppen was caught in front and in flank at close range. More than half Wredell's brigade was destroyed, but the pressure was relieved by a magnificent charge of cavalry. While this had been going on, there had been a great indecisive cavalry *mêlée* on the extreme left of the Prussian line. The French retired, but if Ladmirault had used his fresh troops and almost intact artillery to renew the attack, a disaster to the Prussians would have been almost inevitable. Ladmirault, however, who was still without orders from Bazaine, hesitated to do this, and tamely retired to Doncourt. This battle of 16 August, although the French may be said to have had the best of the fighting, was in reality a decisive reverse for them. Their retreat westwards was now nearly hopeless, and Moltke had time to bring up the second army and drive the enemy either into Metz or against the Belgian frontier. The lessons of the day had been very remarkable. The French infantry had fought with great determination, and its cavalry had been used with success. On the other hand the German artillery had played a decisive part and had inflicted terrible losses on the French, while the German cavalry had twice staved off disaster by charges as gallant as any in the history of war, and the German infantry had held its own against great odds with wonderful tenacity. Alvensleben's splendid determination and tactical skill had also been decisive factors in the German success.

Owing to errors of judgment, which were as much those of Moltke as those of Prince Frederick Charles, the Prussians for the third time in eleven days, in spite of a numerical superiority of three to one in the theatre of war, had found themselves outnumbered in the battlefield. The French had failed to inflict a defeat on an army only one-half the size of their own: even the baleful influence of Bazaine scarcely accounts for this, though it accounts for a great deal. Only three divisions were engaged on the right—the really vital part of the field—while seven divisions with three cavalry divisions and the whole artillery reserve were massed in use-



less strength on the left. Thus it was that 130,000 French failed to beat 77,000 Germans. The fact that the Germans lost 22½ per cent of troops engaged as compared with a French loss of 10 per cent speaks for itself. The former, from Alvensleben downwards, were fired with a splendid determination ; and there can be no doubt that the German commanders got the last ounce out of their troops in a way that was quite foreign to French practice. By doing so they were not only able to maintain themselves against odds of four to one, but they gave the impression that their numbers were much greater than was actually the case. Lebœuf, for instance, was convinced that he was dealing with a force not of 77,000 but of at least 200,000. Above all the Germans displayed a splendid solidarity and spirit of co-operation. The one idea of every German commander (with one or two unimportant exceptions) was to fling himself into the fray at the point where he would be of most service to the common cause. Time after time disaster was staved off by the opportune appearance of troops from another part of the field. In this and in Bazaine's ineptitude lay the strength of the Germans. Had Bazaine perished (as he nearly did in a cavalry skirmish), or had the French commanders handled their troops in the spirited and unselfish way in which the German commanders handled theirs, the battle of 16 August must have ended in an overwhelming victory for the French. Even as it was, had the French renewed their attack on the following morning (the 17th), they would almost certainly have inflicted serious injury on their exhausted opponents. Moltke, at Pont à Mousson, had been curiously ill-informed of the condition of affairs ; directly he received the belated news of the battle on the Metz-Verdun road he hastened the bulk of the first army in that direction ; but it would be well on in the following day (the 17th) before they could reach the fighting line. The King and his Chief of Staff arrived on the ground about 6 a.m., and it was with immense relief that they found the French did not attack. Bazaine had four courses open to him, the first to fall on his exhausted antagonist and force his way through to Verdun ; by his

inaction on the 17th he let this chance slip: the second to retreat east over the Moselle and cut the enemy's communications; this would have been a highly dangerous step, and Bazaine was not the commander to take such a risk: the third to retreat north-west by Conflans or north in the direction of Thionville: the fourth to fall back towards Metz and accept battle in front of the Moselle. The most hopeful of these courses was the third, and it was Moltke's opinion that it would be adopted. As a matter of fact Bazaine, who always followed the line of least apparent risk, decided on the fourth course; he swung his right back, until his whole line was at right-angles to the position of the previous day; and occupied a front of about  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Saint-Privat in the north to Jassy (i.e. almost to the Moselle) on the south. It was on the whole a strong, but by no means a perfect, position; its chief, and in the end fatal, weakness being the exposure of the right flank, which was "in the air". On the left the French line rested on the Moselle and was backed by the strong forts of Plappeville and Saint-Quentin. This makes it all the more strange that Bazaine should have massed his reserves in this quarter, and not on the exposed right at Saint-Privat: but he seems to have been hypnotized by the importance of Metz. The Germans made use of the 17th to bring seven corps into line between Ars and Mars-la-Tour (at right-angles to the French line), the point of contact (and the pivot of the Germans) being at the Bois de Vaux and later at Grave-lotte. On the morning of the 18th they were unaware of Bazaine's decision and took no sufficient steps to probe for the whereabouts of the French. Instead they made a wide sweep northwards, thinking to catch the French in flank if they were retiring in that direction, but always with the alternative of pivoting on their right if the French proved to be to the eastward. For a long time Moltke was in doubt as to where he would find the enemy, but by 8 a.m. he was convinced that they were in the direction of Metz: and by 10.30 he had pretty well fathomed their plan, although he did not yet know how far the French right extended, a

point which was of great importance later in the day. The great mass of troops (about 170,000 men) was wheeled to the right and orders were given for a simultaneous attack all along the French position; but the attack on the right was to be a delaying action while the left struck the decisive blow. The Battle of Gravelotte resolves itself into three parts. The first was not part of Moltke's scheme. The ninth corps (Manstein's) which came in between Saint-Privat and Montigny-le-Grange attacked prematurely soon after midday. Ladmirault had an excellent chance of dealing a severe blow, but he failed to take it. It was not till 5 p.m. that the whole German army was in position and the second phase of the battle began.

Meanwhile Steinmetz on the German right round Gravelotte had also attacked prematurely and at about 3.30 had issued an astounding order for the pursuit of an enemy who was not in flight. This amazing blunder was mercilessly punished by the French, Frossard making a very fine counter-attack. The second German corps, when it came into action, was vigorously attacked by the French and thrown into utter confusion, and the close of the day saw the German right in wild disorder, only maintaining its ground by the tenacity of Moltke. But it was on the French right that the attack was delivered which decided the day. There the German guard and the Saxon corps attacked Canrobert at Roncourt and Saint-Privat in superior numbers, but were held at bay by the excellence of the *chassepôt* fire, the guard losing in a series of rushes 50 per cent of officers and 30 per cent of men. But the superiority of the German artillery at last prevailed, and at about 7.30 p.m. the village of Saint-Privat was rushed by Saxon troops. This completely turned and broke the French right and rolled it up as far as, and beyond, Amanvillers and decided the day in favour of the Germans. Canrobert had lost 4811 killed and wounded and 2000 prisoners, and had inflicted nearly double that loss on his opponents. The failure to support him lost the day to the French.

In the Battle of Gravelotte the French had opposed some

80,000 bayonets and 402 guns to 100,000 Germans with 726 guns. They lost firstly, because of the superiority of the German artillery in every part of the field; secondly, because they had allowed themselves to be decisively outnumbered on their right (the weakest point in their position), where the Germans had 60,000 and 312 guns to the French 40,000 and 156 guns; thirdly, by their failure to employ all their troops to the best advantage; the eighth corps was at no time heavily engaged; fourthly, by the failure of the commander-in-chief to take any steps at all; Bazaine never rode on to the field and practically took no notice of what was going on; he seems to have suffered from some kind of mental paralysis which rendered him almost oblivious to his surroundings.

The battles of Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte threw the army of the Rhine back on Metz and altered the whole complexion of the campaign. It is good testimony to the virility of Moltke's character that within sixteen hours of the ordeal of Gravelotte he had given orders for the continuation of the march on Paris. For this march he had now available about 223,000 men with 813 guns, for he was obliged to leave Prince Frederick Charles with 170,000 men and 638 guns in front of Metz, and even so the investment of Bazaine was a precarious business. The risks he took were therefore great, for if Bazaine displayed energy it would not be difficult for him to cut the German communications. Between the Germans and Paris lay the army of Châlons, under command of Macmahon. It was some 130,000 strong, but many of the troops (in particular those from Alsace) were demoralized by defeat and retreat, and those that were not demoralized were new and untrained. The true policy for the French was now to withdraw this army in face of the German advance, sacrifice Bazaine, and manœuvre to the south. Unfortunately, however, political again prevailed over military expediency, and the traditional and fatal ascendancy of the capital over France once more asserted itself. Ollivier's ministry had given place on 10 August to a new cabinet in which the ruling spirit was the War Minister—General Palikao. Acting in concert with the Empress he decided that at all costs Bazaine must be relieved,

and sent peremptory instructions to this effect to Macmahon. After long hesitations the Marshal was at last persuaded to attempt to carry out Palikao's plan : and on the 23rd the army of Châlons moved from Reims, whither it had marched on the 21st, and advanced eastwards to the River Suippe ; then, owing to the failure of commissariat, swung north again to the Rethel-Mézières railway. Moltke had no knowledge of political pressure from Paris ; he was therefore obliged to devise a plan which would fit in either with a French retirement, which he thought the most likely, or their advance in the direction of Metz. He ordered the two armies into which the invading force was divided to advance in a kind of echelon ; that of the Crown Prince of Prussia which was farthest to the south to be a day's march in front of that of the Crown Prince of Saxony. Its functions were, in the event of a battle between Châlons and Paris, to turn the French right flank, or, in case of a French advance eastwards, to swing round in a great right wheel and press the enemy against the Belgian frontier. The march-tables were so constructed that either plan could be quickly adopted. On 24 August Moltke got the news that Macmahon had moved eastwards, and tentatively (on the 25th) began the first movements of his change of direction. The campaign that follows resolves itself into this : that Macmahon, under political pressure, attempts to edge along the Belgian frontier, cross the Meuse, and hold out his hand to Bazaine : that Moltke lays his plans at all costs to bar Macmahon's progress eastward, that he finally does so by the Battle of Beaumont, and that, having done so, he proceeds to flatten out the French on the anvil of the Belgian frontier, a process which ends in the catastrophe of Sedan.

From 23-26 August Macmahon was feeling his way eastwards in the direction of Montmédy, the direct line to Metz. Moltke, on the other hand, gradually confirmed in the opinion that his opponent was moving eastwards, began on the 26th his great right wheel, and broke off the march on Paris. During the next two days the splendid activity of the German cavalry enabled Moltke to realize the position of his antagonist, while the corresponding failure of the French cavalry

blinded them to the northward sweep of the enemy. Nevertheless on the 26th Macmahon was so far alive to his danger that he telegraphed to Bazaine saying that "he could not move farther east without the risk of being cut off". On the same evening he resolved to abandon the attempt, to slip back north-westwards, and to resume the retreat towards Paris via Mézières: he telegraphed to Palikao announcing this intention, and the Minister for War at once telegraphed to the Emperor: "If Bazaine is abandoned it means revolution". It was this telegram which decided the issue of the war: Macmahon yielded, reversed his plans, and resumed his eastward movement. From that moment his position was hopeless: the only question that remained was, what would be the extent of the disaster?

The continued counter-orders had spread confusion and demoralization amongst the French columns, and this confusion had been increased by the activity of the German cavalry. On the 29th the Stenay Bridge over the Meuse was occupied by a German detachment, and Macmahon's sole chance of getting across was the Mouzon Bridge—only eight miles from the Belgian frontier, towards which he was being gradually edged. The twelfth French corps crossed the river at Mouzon, but the fifth corps, which was without orders owing to the capture of Macmahon's *aide-de-camp*, was still pushing on for Stenay much harassed by the German cavalry patrols; when orders reached it, it withdrew to Beaumont by a night march. There it was overtaken in bivouac by the Germans and defeated with a loss of 6000 to 7000 men and 42 guns. The rout of Beaumont destroyed the already shaken morale of the French, and reduced Macmahon's effective fighting force by almost one-third: it put an end to all idea of crossing the Meuse: it jammed the French yet farther against the frontier and led directly to the final disaster of Sedan.

After Beaumont victory was no longer possible to Macmahon, even escape was extremely problematical. His only course was to try and extricate himself with all possible speed from his perilous situation. Unfortunately he did not

realize the extent and imminence of the danger, was in two minds as to what he should do, and was still influenced by the political pressure which urged him forward to the relief of Bazaine, and that at a moment when the extreme gravity of the military situation should have left no room for any but military considerations. The only course compatible with safety—and even it was by no means easy—was to break the Meuse bridges, sidle off under cover of the river towards Mézières, and resume the retreat westwards; Macmahon was inclined to adopt this course, but the pressure of repeated messages from Paris urging him to continue eastwards made him hesitate, and at that juncture hesitation meant destruction. In this temporizing mood the Marshal decided to rally his army at Sedan, where he would at any rate have the Meuse between him and the enemy, and where he hoped to have time to come to a final decision. But the Meuse would be no obstacle to the Germans unless the bridges were broken, and, although Macmahon gave orders that this should be done, his orders—owing to the mismanagement of his subordinates—were not executed, with the result that the Germans were able to push their troops across the river without any delay and to take full advantage of the Marshal's dilatory tactics.

Sedan from the point of view of modern warfare—and the Franco-Prussian War is essentially modern warfare—is a death-trap. The town lies on the right bank of the winding Meuse; its fortifications in 1870 were quite antiquated; the plateau north-east of the town, which formed the French position on 1 September, slopes gently down towards the town, and is commanded by a ring of wooded heights, well suited for artillery. The German plan was simple and admirably executed. A vigorous attack was to be delivered at Bazeilles, a little above Sedan, where there was an intact railway bridge. While this was in progress the left and right wings were to push across the river above and below the town, and gradually to edge round the French position and occupy the heights above referred to until the circle of investment was complete, and then the remorseless pressure was to begin. The Bavarian corps under General von der Tann was

told off for the attack on Bazeilles : Lebrun met it with great gallantry and vigour. The action was extremely fierce, and the French had good success : but it was only of secondary importance, a fact which they failed to perceive, for while it was in progress, the German wings were stealing round to complete the investment. Their success at Bazeilles encouraged the French in the fatal belief that it was still possible for them to break out eastward. Ducrot alone of the French generals seems to have been alive to the fearful gravity of the situation. He had already on the previous day attempted to begin the retreat on Mézières, which alone could have partially extricated the army ; but his movement had been countermanded by Macmahon. Since then he had repeatedly drawn the attention of his colleagues to the imminence of the danger to which they seemed oblivious. At 6.15 a.m. fortune placed the chief command in Ducrot's hands. Macmahon received a wound which rendered him incapable of further intervention in the battle and he appointed Ducrot to succeed him. Ducrot realized that the only hope of extricating any part of the army was to retreat at once on Mézières, and with admirable promptitude he gave orders for the commencement of this operation. It was full of danger, but it was the last chance. At this moment<sup>1</sup> General de Wimpffen, who had joined the army two days before to replace Faily, produced an order from the War Minister, giving him the supreme command in the event of Macmahon's elimination ; De Wimpffen was a brave soldier but he had no clear conception of the general situation, no previous experience of the Germans, and no knowledge of Moltke's methods ; moreover his was a political appointment ; he had come to carry out political instructions. Under the pressure of Palikao's orders, and encouraged by the partial success of Lebrun over the Bavarians, he cancelled Ducrot's orders, and by doing so sealed the fate of the army and the empire. Even the hope of a decisive success at Bazeilles, which would not have really affected the result of the battle, was soon dissipated ; for the Bavarians, strongly reinforced, now carried the village.

<sup>1</sup> At 9 a.m.



Meanwhile the German fifth and eleventh corps had crossed the river below the great bend, to complete the investment on this side and cut off the French retreat on Mézières. At the head of the bend of the river at Falizette the road to Mézières passes through a considerable defile commanded by heights. Both in order to secure their own retreat and to prevent the German advance in this direction, it was of the last importance to the French that these heights should be held, and they had made the fatal mistake of not occupying them. De Wimpffen, cherishing his delusions, was intent on breaking out eastwards and wholly occupied with the fighting at Bazeilles; he had handed over the command in this part of the field to Ducrot; but it was in vain that that gallant soldier tried to remedy the fatal negligence by magnificent cavalry charges. Once through the Falizette defile the Germans had the fortunes of the day in their own hands: one by one the batteries appeared on the heights; a terrific bombardment then began, and increased in intensity until from 400 to 500 guns were concentrated on the French position and the town of Sedan.

De Wimpffen was still confident in his ability to cut his way out, but the Emperor who had been present as a spectator all day, with a truer appreciation of the circumstances, had given way to despair, and at 1 p.m. caused the white flag to be hoisted on the citadel. As was only to be expected this had no effect, and no general could be found who would put his name to a capitulation. So the struggle continued. At last some Prussian officers entered the town and demanded its surrender. Napoleon at once addressed a letter to the King of Prussia: "*Monsieur mon frère, n'ayant pu mourir à la tête de mes troupes, il ne me reste qu'à mettre mon épée entre les mains de votre Majesté. Napoléon.*" To this the King replied asking that an officer be appointed with full powers to complete the surrender. De Wimpffen met Moltke and Bismarck at Donchéry, and it became quickly clear that the two adamant Prussians would not spare their conquered foe: the whole of the French troops were to become prisoners of war: the French demurred; Moltke pointed piti-

lessly to their hopeless situation and gave them till 9 o'clock to decide, at which hour the bombardment was to recommence. De Wimpffen and his colleagues returned to Sedan, and the mouths of 400 to 500 cannon visible from the citadel were a more convincing argument than any that Moltke and Bismarck could have devised. At 6 a.m. the Emperor set out to seek an interview with the King. He met Bismarck at Donchéry, but could not prevail on him to give way an inch; and it was not until the capitulation was signed that the two sovereigns met. Thus ended the catastrophe of Sedan; it had been in the main a splendid illustration of the merits of the German military system and of the weakness of the French. Never had the mechanical precision of the German methods been more admirably developed. Never had the vigorous independent initiative of their commanders been more happily displayed. Never had the relentless nature of their blows, military and diplomatic, been more completely demonstrated. Above all, never had the leadership of their great commander been more cool, thorough, and sagacious. It was perhaps in leadership that their superiority over the French was most marked. On the French side everything had gone wrong. Driven into a death-trap, partly by the political pressure of the ministry, partly by the vigour of their opponents, they had never realized their position, and had neglected the only means of escape. Losing their commander at the outset of the battle, they had for a moment fallen under the command of the one man who might have extricated them without complete disaster. But he was appointed only to be supplanted by a general who was totally ignorant of the new warfare and blind to the perils of the situation. In every direction subordinates had made fatal mistakes. The bridges had not been destroyed, the vital positions had not been occupied. Only in valour had the French been the equals of their adversaries.

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## CHAPTER XL

### THE PEOPLE'S WAR, THE COMMUNE, AND THE PEACE OF FRANKFORT

THE catastrophe of Sedan did not end the war, but opened a new and, as it proved, final phase. France, even after the terrible blow of 1 September disorganized and unprepared for national resistance though she was, held out for five months, during which there were many moments more uncomfortable for the Prussians than any that had hitherto occurred. The Prussian army had proved its professional superiority to the French under the new conditions of warfare, it was now to discover that a nation in agony has resources other than those vested in its professional army, and that an irregular national resistance, contemptible as it may seem to the professional soldier, has terrors even greater than those of the formal resistance of regular troops, and presents conditions more incalculable and therefore less easy to meet. The unreasonable human element that refuses to recognize defeat enters the arena and complicates and confuses the problem, until the professional soldier is glad to make the best terms he can with it. The terrible months of the autumn and winter of 1870-71 were full of lessons for Prussia, for France, and for posterity.

The Germans in the first place quickly began to experience the difficulties attendant on irregular warfare in a country whose entire population is hostile. Trustworthy information ceased to be obtainable: reconnaissance, save on the grand scale, became impossible: ignorance of the strength and whereabouts of the enemy's forces became a common condition, with the result that, while large armies were detached to deal with phantom opponents, insufficient forces were often used in dealing with strong bodies of the enemy. The "fog

of war," as it is called, became more and more intense, and, while the Prussian army remained a magnificent engine, its energies were too often misdirected, and inevitably so. Next the Germans discovered that even in France, dominated as she has always been by Paris, the capital was not everything, that there was in the last resort a fund of resistance outside of and detached from Paris. Moltke, in particular, laid altogether exaggerated stress on the importance of the capital and scorned the idea of provincial resistance. He was destined to a remarkable disillusionment. Not only was the resistance of Paris infinitely more determined than he had thought possible, but the provinces developed a capacity for resistance, and after a time for attack also, that he had not dreamt of. And while Prussia was learning these lessons, France, and with her Europe, was also learning in a school of adversity. The first and most terrible of these lessons was the need for deliberate preliminary organization even of the last resources of national resistance. A little provision, a little preparation in time of peace, would have made all the difference between success and failure. All the magnificent energy of Gambetta and de Freycinet could not extemporize a military organization for national defence in the face of invasion: and so amid all the horrors of the most desperate and recriminatory warfare France learnt the lesson that, because national resistance to invasion is necessarily desperate, there is no reason why it should not also be deliberately organized. The final blows in a struggle of self-defence should be as scientific as those dealt in the early sparring; it is not when driven to the ropes that the boxer can abandon science. One other lesson in her agony France learnt and taught: that there is a moment when desperate and apparently unreasonable resistance actually pays, when a *fou furieux* like Gambetta<sup>1</sup> is the best asset of a nation. If France had collapsed after Sedan, as—from a professional military point of view she should have collapsed—not only would her prestige have been ruined, but her self-respect would have vanished. As it was in those five months of self-sacrifice she vindicated her right to retain

<sup>1</sup> The phrase is that of Thiers.

her self-respect, and demonstrated the fact that it is dangerous to press a proud nation to extremities of humiliation.

News of Sedan reached Paris on 3 September and the republican deputies of the left, under the leadership of Jules Favre and Léon Gambetta, at once proposed the overthrow of the Napoleonic dynasty and the establishment of a committee of government to offer resistance to the invasion. The ministry was completely paralysed and failed to give any lead to public opinion. As a matter of fact defeat involved the spontaneous fall of the dynasty, for the Bonapartes only reigned on condition of remaining undefeated. Thiers recognized this and advocated a declaration which, without proclaiming the overthrow of the dynasty, tacitly accepted its disappearance. This compromise found favour with a majority of the deputies: but by this time the populace, which was naturally in a state of considerable excitement, took the law into its own hands. The hall of the Assembly was invaded: loud demands for a Republic were emitted: Gambetta and Favre assumed the lead: and a Provisional Government of National Defence was proclaimed from the Hôtel de Ville. Trochu, the Governor-General of Paris, was made President, and Gambetta, Jules Favre, Arago, Grévy, and Rochefort completed the Government (4 September, 1870).

The Provisional Government found itself in an equivocal position. In the first place it was really little more than a local council brought into being to face the immediate need, to wit the defence of Paris, and not in any real sense a national body created to protect the interests of France. That this was the case was very soon to be demonstrated, when it allowed itself to be locked up in the besieged capital, and thus placed itself in a position from which it was practically impossible to govern. This was the commencement of the severance of the interests of the capital and the nation which was to result in the *Commune* of 1871. But the Government of 4 September was not only a non-representative and non-national body, it was also a body divided in itself. For while Gambetta and the extreme Republican members, returning to

the heroic attitude of 1792, advocated resistance to the last extremity, Trochu, the nominal head of the Government, and Jules Favre were willing to treat with the invader. The latter actually met Bismarck on 19 September at Ferrières to learn from him the terms on which an armistice would be granted, while Thiers, by direction of the Government, started on a round of the European courts to ascertain whether any of the powers could be persuaded to intervene. Already therefore there was evidence of discord in the Government.

On the side of the Germans there had been no hesitation after Sedan. In spite of the fact that very large forces were engaged in the investment of Metz and the sieges of Toul and Strassburg, and that every day's march meant a longer line of communications and a corresponding reduction in the fighting force, Moltke lost no time in deciding to strike at once at the French Capital. He was impelled to this decision by his conviction that Paris would not submit for long to the rigours of a siege and that the provinces would do nothing to relieve the Capital, and by his belief that the fall of the Capital would end the war at a blow. In each of these calculations he was wrong. Paris held out for nearly five months and suffered great extremities with admirable fortitude: the provinces organized a resistance which all but ruined the Prussian campaign, and the fall of Paris did not involve the cessation of hostilities. Nevertheless Moltke's decision was worthy of him, and the correct course for a commander situated as he was after Sedan. For the investment of the twenty miles of *enceinte* no more than 147,000 men were available, though this number was quickly increased after the fall of Toul and Strassburg in the end of September and above all after the surrender of Bazaine on 27 October. On the other side the French could count on Vinoy's thirteenth corps which had not been involved in the catastrophe of Sedan, and on the newly enrolled fourteenth corps: in all about 80,000 regulars, none of them of very high quality; 115,000 *gardes mobiles* and 100,000 *gardes nationales* brought the total up to about 295,000 men. With these numerous, but to a great extent untrained, forces and

with the assistance of naval guns, Paris prepared to defy the invader: and on 19 September began the siege which, contrary to Moltke's expectations, was to hold a large part of the Prussian army for the best part of five months.<sup>1</sup>

Before the completion of the investment the Provisional Government had so far recognized its duty to the nation as to send a delegation to Tours to organize provincial resistance, and on 9 October Gambetta made a sensational escape from Paris in a balloon and joined the delegates. Ably backed by de Freycinet, he at once became the life and soul of the national resistance. His frenzied energy and half-mad violence roused France to efforts of which no one, least of all the Prussian Head-quarter Staff, had believed her capable. Not even Gambetta, however, could extemporize training, transport, commissariat, and leadership: and the "People's War," which, given ordinary foresight and preparedness, might have ended in the paralysis, if not the defeat, of the invaders, was doomed from the first to be a splendid forlorn hope, the profit of which was moral rather than material. Of regular troops outside Paris, France was almost completely destitute. There were nine cavalry regiments, three infantry regiments of three battalions each, three odd infantry battalions and a single battery of artillery, and that was all. On the other hand the irregular resources from which recruits could be drawn, and which included the *garde mobile*, *garde nationale* and *francs tireurs* (privately organized bodies of irregulars), numbered over two million men. It was not lack of men or even of material that stultified the national resistance, but lack of that deliberate preliminary organization which cannot be extemporized, and lack also of capable leaders.

The opportunity of the French was in the early days of the investment, while Toul, Strassburg, and especially Metz, were holding out and the beleaguering army was really too weak for its mission; this gave the French ten weeks' law, and had there been any territorial organization existing in France they might have used those weeks with great effect.

<sup>1</sup> Actually eighteen weeks and four days.



Already before the arrival of Gambetta at Tours, General de la Motte Rouge, who was in command, in response to instructions that he should do something and do it quickly, had driven in the fourth German cavalry division which had been pushing southward along the Paris-Orleans road. General von der Tann with the first Bavarian corps (supplemented later by the twenty-second division, in all 21,000 infantry, 6700 cavalry, and 160 guns), had been dispatched south with orders to clear the country in the direction of Orleans and Chartres, occupy Orleans, and push on to Tours. Von der Tann was opposed in this task by superior forces of the enemy, but they were ill trained and badly led and, though they fought heroically, they were unable to save Orleans, which was occupied by the Bavarians on 11 October, though only after von der Tann had lost 1200 men. The Bavarian commander was now instructed to push southward to Bourges, the great arsenal, and Vierzon, the great railway junction, as well as towards Tours, the seat of government: but, with the small force available after allowing for the garrison of Orleans, and in view of the difficult ground south of the Loire and the great length of communications which such an advance would have entailed, he considered the risks too great, and contented himself with detaching a force to occupy Chartres, which town surrendered on 21 October.

Meanwhile Gambetta's influence was making itself felt; recruits were flocking to the standards,<sup>1</sup> and measures were taken which made the resistance to the invaders really universal. D'Aurelle de Paladines replaced de la Motte Rouge, and an army of 120,000 was prepared for the recapture of Orleans, which was to be used as a base for an expedition for the relief of Paris. This was the true crisis of the campaign. There was good hope of a successful issue; von der Tann was greatly outnumbered, the investment of Paris strained the resources of the invaders to the utmost, the garrison of the capital was ready for a determined sortie. Just at this moment came the fatal news that Bazaine had capitulated.

<sup>1</sup> About 800,000 men were recruited in four months.

lated on 27 October. To the very end that incapable soldier seemed destined to ruin the fortunes of his country. No doubt his position at Metz had been growing increasingly uncomfortable, and his ultimate surrender unless relieved was inevitable: but he was far from being reduced to the last extremity. A Masséna or a Palafox would have held out for several weeks more, especially in view of the enormous importance to France of the detention of 200,000 Germans before Metz: but Bazaine was not a man to endure extremities; he surrendered prematurely, and by his surrender stultified the heroism of Gambetta and the patriotism of Paris, and ruined the chances of France in the second campaign, as he had at Gravelotte thrown away her chances in the first.<sup>1</sup>

Even this terrible blow did not affect Gambetta's resolution. He proceeded with the execution of his plan. Von der Tann was attacked on 9 November at Coulmiers (south-west of Orleans), driven back through the city, and compelled to evacuate it. By this time, however, Prince Frederick Charles' troops, released from the siege of Metz, were becoming available and the scales were turned against the French. But now the difficulty of dealing with a national resistance began to make itself felt. Lacking trustworthy information, unable to spare troops for reconnaissance in force, the Prussian Head-quarter Staff fell into blunders of judgment which told heavily in favour of the French, largely discounted the advantage which had accrued by the capitulation of Metz, and greatly prolonged the war. Steps were indeed taken to cover the long and delicate line of communications, an attack on which might have afforded the French their best chance of success. Werder, with the troops which had been held before Strassburg, occupied Dijon, and siege was laid to Belfort. The first army (part of that of Metz) was pushed forward towards Rouen and Amiens to guard against local attacks from that quarter, and the second was told off to deal with the situation on the Loire. But the activity of General

<sup>1</sup> 6000 officers, 173,000 men, 541 field guns and 800 siege guns were surrendered at Metz.

Fiereck in the west had convinced Moltke that it was in this quarter and not in the direction of Orleans that the real danger lay. As a matter of fact Fiereck's army was a myth; outside the imagination of the Prussian Head-quarter Staff it never really existed; his only command was a few detachments of *francs tireurs* and irregulars, but these he used with brilliant ability to create the illusion of an "Army of the West". A detachment under the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which had been originally intended to move against Orleans, was diverted to deal with this imaginary Western menace, and operated actively against a non-existent force, while Prince Frederick Charles with the second army (from Metz) adopted a defensive attitude between Paris and Orleans. It was not till the end of November that it was considered safe to order an advance southward. Gambetta meanwhile was urging d'Aurelle de Paladines to push forward to the relief of Paris, with the result that on 28 November the French attacked the German left at Beaune la Rolande with 50,000 men. This attack was successfully repulsed by the tenth corps after severe fighting, and thus the initial step on the road to Paris failed. Aware that a southward sortie from Paris was in contemplation, Gambetta with great resolution immediately ordered a second attempt, this time on the German right: the Battle of Loigny Poupry, where the detachment of the Grand Duke was now stationed, was fought on 2 December. It very much resembled that of Beaune la Rolande, and ended similarly in the repulse of the French. This time the Germans realized the extent of their success and pushed their way forward to Orleans, which they reoccupied on 4 December though only after severe fighting. Thus the French had been defeated thrice in a single week. All idea of co-operation with the defenders of Paris was at an end. The second crisis of the campaign was over.

The great sortie from Paris had taken place on 29 November but had ended in complete failure. The combinations of the French did not succeed, the preparations were incomplete, and the Germans met the sortie with a stubborn resistance.

On 4 December Ducrot led his men back into Paris. The condition of the besieged city was becoming desperate. Meanwhile Rouen and Amiens had fallen to Manteuffel, Werder got the upper hand of Cremer and Garibaldi—the Italian patriot had taken up arms on behalf of his old allies—in the Dijon theatre of war. Belfort, however, held out resolutely.

After the fall of Orleans the seat of Government was removed to Bordeaux, but in spite of all that had happened there was still some fight left in the French. General Chanzy offered a staunch resistance to the wearied Germans in front of Beaugency, until the terrible hardships of a winter campaign became too great for the endurance of his raw troops, and he withdrew to Vendôme and finally to le Mans, having given an excellent account of himself under the most trying conditions. Chanzy's operations had enabled Bourbaki to rally the shattered main army of the Loire: and, unable to do more, the Germans fell back on Orleans and Chartres. While a paralysis of weariness thus fell on the south-western theatre of war, fresh trouble for the Germans sprang up in the north, where General Faidherbe had gathered a considerable force (40,000) round Arras. He drove the Germans out of Amiens, saved le Havre which had been threatened, and held Manteuffel at bay in a three days' action in the neighbourhood of Amiens.

Encouraged by the news of this success, the garrison of Paris attempted another sortie, this time towards the north. But Trochu had altogether lost heart and failed to press it (21 December). Moltke had collected sufficient guns and ammunition to enable him on 27 December to begin the bombardment of the forts, and on 5 January that of the town. Meanwhile, undaunted by repeated failures, Gambetta with rare courage and persistence was preparing a final effort to rescue the capital. D'Aurelle de Paladines had been superseded, and an elaborate plan devised for combining the various contingents towards the East and threatening the German communications. But the necessary movements proved altogether too involved for raw troops and a dislocated railway system, and Werder was able to concentrate his

forces in time to save the situation for the Germans. He cut Bourbaki, who was in charge of the operations, off from Belfort (the relief of which was part of the scheme), took up a strong position east of that town, resisted all attacks, and finally obliged Bourbaki to fall back. Hemmed in by the German reinforcements sent from head-quarters, Bourbaki was pressed against the Swiss frontier, and at last over it, when his 80,000 men were promptly disarmed by the Swiss. Shortly afterwards (17 February), Belfort surrendered by order of the Government after holding out for 106 days.

While these events had been happening in the east, Chanzy had reorganized his army at le Mans, and Prince Frederick Charles was pushed westwards to deal with him. The Germans (60,000 strong) attacked the French (150,000 strong) in front of le Mans and after two days' heavy fighting drove them from their positions, inflicting on them a loss of 6000 killed and wounded and capturing 20,000 prisoners. Only Faidherbe now remained to be dealt with. He had won a substantial success on 3 January near Péronne, but his troops were raw and exhausted and he failed to follow it up. Then he was ordered to move eastwards towards Saint-Quentin in order to threaten the German communications and co-operate with Bourbaki. On 19 January, however, the Germans fell on the French near Saint-Quentin and Faidherbe suffered defeat.

Everywhere therefore the French had been fought to a standstill and the fate of Paris was sealed. A final desperate sortie, in which the National Guard for the first time took part, was made on 19 January from Mont Valérien in the direction of Versailles. It ended like the others in failure, and on the 23rd Jules Favre appeared at Versailles to treat with the enemy. Five days later (28 February) an armistice of three weeks was signed in order that a National Assembly might be elected to decide the question of peace or war. Paris surrendered, the outer works being delivered up to the enemy, and an indemnity of £8,000,000 being promised. Gambetta protested vigorously against the usurpation of national authority by the capital: but hardly a voice was

raised to support him, so that he was forced into resignation. France had had enough: the elections, which followed immediately on the armistice, proved that peace was the uppermost thought with the majority of the nation. What form the new government of France should take was a minor consideration. Of the 630 deputies who assembled at Bordeaux about 400 were Monarchists of one shade or another (divided equally between Orleanism and Legitimism), while some 200 were Republicans, about half of whom could be reckoned as Radicals, and the Assembly included about 30 Bonapartists. But the Assembly of Bordeaux was not primarily a party assembly at all. The deputies had been chosen not for their political opinions but for their personal qualifications. Their mission was to extricate France from her horrible position, not to found any particular form of government or further any special party programme.

During the elections there had been a general set towards Thiers. His long experience, his caution, intellectual power, and the fact that he had foretold the disasters which had overtaken the nation, prompted France to look to him in this hour of need. He had been elected in twenty-six constituencies and the Assembly promptly nominated him Chief of the Executive, Jules Favre being chosen President. Thiers, whose antecedents are familiar to us, was now seventy-three, but, still full of buoyancy and self-confidence, he had not by any means outgrown ambition and self-interest. He had been instrumental in the establishment of the Orleans monarchy, but had quarrelled violently with Guizot, and the downfall of Louis Philippe was largely the consequence of the extreme party feeling which he fomented. Then, opposed as he was to the Empire, he had sat down under Napoleon III. In 1852 he had been driven from public life and had devoted his leisure to the production of his "History of the Consulate and Empire." Returning to political life in 1863, he had proved his good sense and political vision by foreseeing the connexion between Italian and German unity; as well as by his condemnation of the Mexican expedition. Here then was a practical politician of ripe experience, great self-reliance, and unrivalled judg-

ment, who was ready to deal with the terrible situation in which France was plunged.

Thiers' object, like that of the Assembly and indeed of the whole country, was to find the form of government which in this time of stress would divide France least, and to procure, party man as he was, the temporary burial of the party hatchet. His first step was to pledge himself to observe a strict neutrality on the constitutional question and to devote himself to remedial measures (Pact of Bordeaux). The question whether the struggle should be continued had already been decided in the elections. The public verdict was for peace. This was not to say that a continuance of resistance was impossible. Indeed the capitulation of Paris would have made resistance easier. The efforts of Gambetta had been gravely hampered by the needs of the Capital, which had involved sending raw forces time after time to the attack. If the war had been continued this would have been altered: the French could have stood on the defensive and the onus of attack would have been with the Germans. But the country had already declared for peace, and the conclusion of peace was the first task of the new Chief of the Executive. On 21 February therefore he met Bismarck. That statesman, who had throughout been opposed to the advance to Paris, was also anxious for peace. He had already laid down his terms to Jules Favre—Alsace, Metz, and Belfort, that part of the Lorraine known as the department of the Moselle, and an indemnity of six milliards; France to be occupied until the sum was paid.<sup>1</sup> Thiers secured an extension of the armistice by four days, and procured interviews with the King-Emperor and Crown Prince, in which he pleaded for more generous treatment. Bismarck had quickly seen that Thiers would not renew hostilities for the sake of Metz: he gave up the claim to Belfort and reduced the indemnity by one milliard, on condition that the Germans should be allowed to occupy the Champs Élysées quarter of Paris until the ratification of the terms. On this basis the preliminaries

<sup>1</sup> But the evacuation was to begin with the payment of the first instalment.

of peace were signed on 26 February; on 1 March they were ratified by the Assembly.

This surrender of territory, and in particular the humiliating condition which handed over the Capital for occupation, rendered inevitable a catastrophe which had long been probable—to wit a struggle between France and Paris. The over-riding of the Capital by the country in the matter of terms of peace, the surrender of Paris for occupation by the enemy, the selection of Versailles as the meeting place of the Assembly, the monarchical character of that Assembly, the consequent fears for the stability of the Republic, and finally the ill-timed measures of the Government enforcing the rents and debts due in Paris for the period of the siege, all contributed to the breach between France and the Capital. And the city was crammed with inflammable material. Many of the more substantial citizens had departed; commerce and industry were at a standstill; the entire population was not only idle and excited but armed; the streets were full of disbanded soldiers, for the National Guard had been allowed to retain their weapons at the armistice.<sup>1</sup> Incendiaries had flocked to the city from every quarter: extremists of every shade—Anarchists (or Blanquists as they were called), Jacobins, Socialists, and the industrial combination known as the Internationale—began to act together, gradually concentrating on the ideal of a communal federation, such as had been advocated by Rousseau. This ideal became the rallying point of the discontented factions. Rural plebiscites had been the undoing of the country and were to be ended, Republicanism was to be retained, the provinces were not to dictate to the Capital, nor the rural districts to the towns: as for the enemy, memories of the national resistance of 1792 were revived, and the surrender of French territory was held up to execration by the men who deemed them-

<sup>1</sup> Jules Favre had agreed to this; he thought it was impossible to disarm them. He afterwards asked pardon of God and man for his blunder. There has always been a suspicion that Bismarck was not averse to a popular outbreak in Paris. Jules Favre did not believe, however, that the Germans attempted to provoke the *Commune* (Favre, "Le gouvernement de la défense nationale," III. 342).



selves the successors of the Jacobins of that earlier period. Clearly a conflagration was inevitable. Thiers recognized from the first that Paris would have to be subdued and that the troops, of which there were some 25,000 to 30,000 available, would have to be employed for the purpose.

The brief occupation of the Champs Élysées quarter by the Germans (1-3 March) had driven the Parisians to a frenzy: and many of the cannons from the ramparts were dragged up to Montmartre. The National Guard sided wholeheartedly with the insurrectionaries, formed themselves into a federation, and appointed a Central Committee which took a prominent part in the organization of revolt. Thiers, who went in person to the capital, decided that the first step was to recover the cannons from Montmartre: but the soldiers who were sent to carry out this dangerous and disagreeable task failed in their duty and fraternized with the populace, and Generals Thomas and Lecomte were assassinated (18 March): whereupon Thiers and the other officials withdrew to Versailles and prepared to reduce the capital by military operations. Thus began the second siege of Paris; this time not by foreigners but by Frenchmen.

For a moment there was a stupefied pause in which the voice of conciliation was heard. But matters had already gone too far: and on 22 March a manifestation by "friends of order" on the *Place Vendôme* was fired on, after which nothing could avert fratricidal strife of the most terrible character. A fresh *Commune*, representative of every shade of Republican opinion, was elected: but the Central Committee continued to sit and to direct the insurrection. On 3 April the Communists made an attempt to strike at Versailles, but were held at bay by the defences of Mont Valérien. After this the siege proper began. The inspiration of the attack came from Thiers. The little, elderly, frock-coated figure fluttered briskly amongst the batteries, directed the method of attack, and peered from behind huge glasses at the effect of the bombardment; he was indefatigable, adamant, almost jaunty, throughout the terrible time. Within the city the guiding spirits were Felix Pyat and Delescluze,

who acted through a newly established Committee of the Public Safety, both revolutionary veterans, steeped in the most violent Jacobin traditions. Delescluze indeed was a dying man—a tragic impressive figure. Many foreigners—Poles and Italians—were given commands.

On 9 May Fort Issy was captured by the besiegers, on the 14th Fort Vauves, and on 21 May the Western District was occupied by the forces of the Government. The *Commune* dissolved itself, the Committee of Public Safety, under the influence of Delescluze, stood firm. The Revolutionaries were resolved to fight to the death and if necessary to bury themselves in the ruins of their homes. "After the barricades our houses, after our houses our ruins," was the word given by Delescluze. The week that followed baffles description: fierce fighting and fierce reprisals, incendiarism, massacre, martial law, executions and fusillades, were its characteristics, and it was rightly known as the "bloody week". Amongst the historical buildings that perished were the Tuileries and the Hôtel de Ville. Amongst the innocent victims was the Archbishop of Paris, who was held by the Communists as hostage. With the gradual reduction of Paris reprisals began. The military authorities acted with merciless severity. By the 28th the insurrection had been repressed, but Paris was a shambles and full of smoking ruins. Then the Government reprisals began. All the leaders of the *Commune* were summarily condemned and shot. There were 350,000 denunciations, 43,500 prisoners: nearly 10,000 persons were condemned to banishment, deportation, or detention. In all Paris lost some 80,000 citizens.

All through this terrible crisis the Government had been occupied with the negotiations for a definitive peace with Germany. A conference between the plenipotentiaries of the two powers met at Brussels on 24 March, 1871, and it quickly became clear that the Germans meant to extract the last drop of blood out of their vanquished foe. They insisted that the payment of the five milliard indemnity should be in coin, which was wholly unreasonable, they demanded compensation for the Germans who had been expelled from

France, the reimposition of the commercial treaty of 1862, the unconditional surrender of the railways in the ceded districts,<sup>1</sup> and the reintroduction of a provision securing private property at sea. Counter proposals were made on behalf of France. The outbreak of civil war gravely complicated and aggravated the situation: to meet the crisis Thiers was obliged to ask for concessions from the Prussians, so that he might have sufficient troops for the reduction of Paris, and the Prussians were in no mood to grant concessions without a *quid pro quo*. They began to press for modifications in their favour of the frontier as set forth in the preliminaries with the object of securing for Germany the rich district of Thionville. As soon, however, as it became clear that the Government was going to master the Parisian insurgents, Bismarck determined to bring matters to a head. He hinted that he was negotiating with the Bonapartists and half threatened an ultimatum. He then took the negotiations out of the hands of the Brussels convention and went in person to Frankfort to meet Jules Favre and Pouyer-Quertier, plenipotentiaries for France: just at the moment of the downfall of the *Commune* the definitive treaty was signed (10 May).

The Treaty of Frankfort embodied the terms of the preliminaries of Versailles, but considerably modified them to the detriment of France. The evacuation of Paris and the adjoining departments was only to take place after the restoration of order and the payment of the third instalment of the indemnity. The indemnity was to be paid in coin, five hundred millions within thirty days of the establishment of the French government, one milliard in 1871, another half-milliard by May, 1872, and the balance by 2 March, 1874. The French garrison of Paris was limited to 50,000 men and the French army was confined behind the Loire till order was restored or fifteen hundred millions of indemnity paid. Requisitions by the German army of occupation were insisted on unless the French government supported the German army. Commercially, most-favoured-nation relations were established between France and Germany, and the products of the ceded

<sup>1</sup> The bondholders, however, were compensated.

districts were to be admitted free into France until September, 1871. All these provisions were aggravations of the Convention of Versailles. On the other hand Bismarck agreed to make a small payment for the ceded railways and contented himself with rectifications of frontier more moderate than those which had been demanded at Brussels. The Treaty of Frankfurt left France free to salve her wounds. The story of her rapid recuperation and of the establishment of the Third Republic does not fall within the scope of this work.

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